

Working with Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs)
Webinar delivered May 30, 2012

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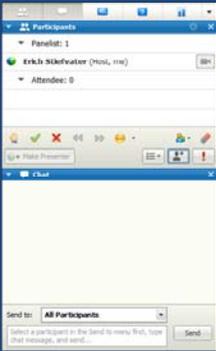
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[Erich Stiefvater, webinar host] Okay. So thank you, Debbie, and welcome again to Working with Veterans Service Organizations. Just a few housekeeping items, and then we will introduce you to our presenters and we'll get underway.

Housekeeping

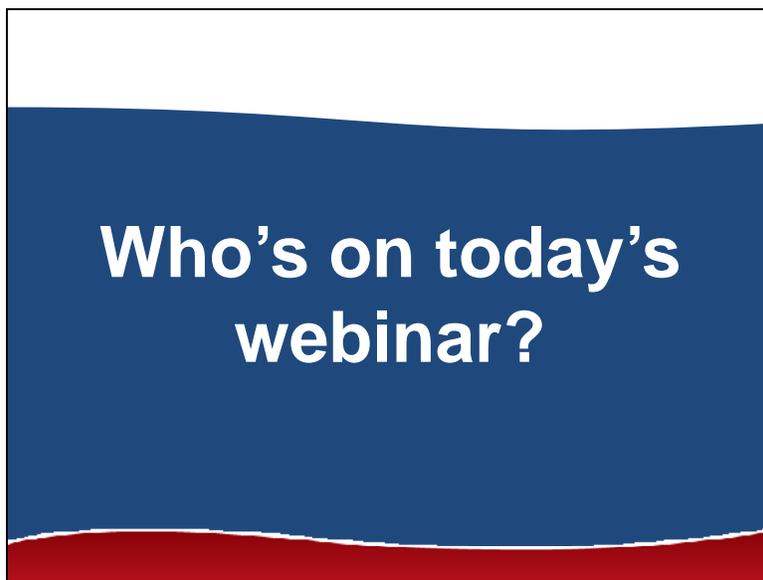
- Phones are muted
- Ask questions sending a chat message to "All Participants" using the Chat panel on the right side of your screen



So as you probably noticed, the phones are muted. As Debbie mentioned earlier, we have about 150 registrants so we expect a large turnout. To reduce background noise and make this a more pleasant experience, we've got all the phones muted. We'd like to ask you to, if you have a question or would like to make a comment, to use Chat panel. That should appear on the right side of your screen. Please, when you send a chat, send it to all participants so that all of us can see it. You may have someone else out there who would like to ask the same question, so we'd like to all be able to see it and respond to it. We've built in opportunities for questions throughout the presentation. We will also handle those via the Chat. At the very end, if there is time, we might open up the phone lines for anyone who prefers to ask questions that way, but we'll see how we're doing.

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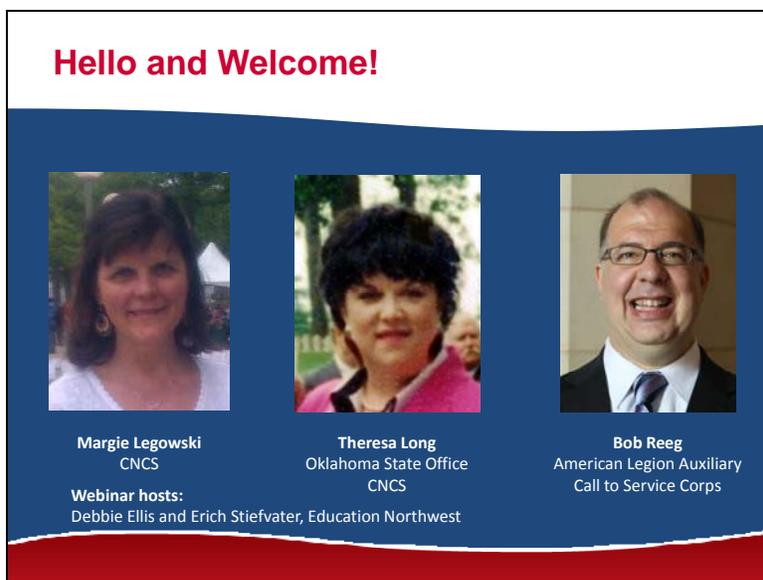
At the very end, after we close out the webinar, you will be prompted to take a couple of surveys, one from WebEx and one from us. Please do be sure to take time to answer both of those, as we will be doing more of these webinars and want to make them as useful and effective as we can. Okay.



So what we'd like to do now is learn a little bit about you. Debbie is going to open up a poll that asks you some questions.

[Poll opens]

You should see that appearing on the right side of the screen. She would like to know what program you're with and your experience working with Veterans Service Organizations. While you're completing that poll, Debbie, if you would like to go ahead and advance to the next slide. Folks, please go ahead and continue to complete the poll, but while you're doing that, let's hear from our presenters. And, Margie, would you like to just give a brief introduction to yourself.



[Margie Legowski] Certainly.

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Thank you so much, Erich and Debbie. This is Margie Legowski. I'm at the Corporation for National and Community Service here in Washington D.C. I work in the Strategy Office as the liaison with Koby Langley and all of the good work that he and Theresa and Bob and others, including you all, are doing in the field of veterans and military service and military families. I'd like to just turn it to Theresa right now. Theresa, could you introduce yourself and then could you turn it over to Bob and introduce himself?

[Theresa Long] Sure.

Thanks, Margie. Hi, this is Theresa Long, and I work with the Corporation for National Community Service. I'm the Oklahoma state director and also work closely with Koby Langley and other members of the veteran focus area, and also serve for the Corporation as the national deputy representative on the Department of Veterans Affairs Volunteer Service Advisory Committee. And so I'll turn it over to Bob.

[Erich] Oh, Bob's connecting in. It looks like his connection might be a little rough. While we wait for Bob to connect back in, I think we've given folks enough time to complete the poll. Why don't we go ahead and see who is on the phone with us. [Pause] Okay. WebEx is just doing some calculations here, and so you now should see on the right side of the screen the responses to the poll question.

[Poll results displayed]

And, Bob, are you back on?

[Bob Reeg] I am. But I need someone to go read their e-mail.

[Erich] Okay. Do you want to give a quick introduction, Bob?

[Bob] Hi, everyone. My name is Bob Reeg. I'm the project director of the American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corp, and that is our joint investment of resources from AmeriCorps National and AmeriCorps VISTA. We have members in service in almost 30 organizations around the country, and they're performing a variety of capacity-building functions to build the capability of their host organizations to improve resources and services to military service members, veterans, and their families.

[Erich] Okay. Thank you. And just looking at our poll results it looks like we have a broad mix of experience with working with Veteran Service Organizations, as well as good representations from our different national service streams.

So it looks like some good representation from Senior Corps in particular. It looks like we have some veterans and members, military family members on the call with us, so we look forward to your perspective, and then kind of a range of experience of working with Veterans Service Organizations.

So hopefully this presentation will hit the sweet spot, giving some new ideas to the folks that have some experience working with VSOs, as well as kind of a good primer and set of action items for those of you that are new to partnering with VSOs or would like to consider it.

So I think with that why don't we -- And the last question here, number five, "Are you currently working with a VSO?" About 30% of you said that you are. At the end of this session, Bob and Theresa were going to be sharing some examples, so if any of you want to share out what's been going on for you, that will be a place for you to share some of the good stuff you're doing in the field as time allows. Okay. But I think we'd like to go ahead and turn this over to our presenters.

So you might hear from Debbie and myself later in the presentation, but for right now, let's hand it over to Margie. If you could give us kind of the framing of this session and the outcome?

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Session Outline

- What is a Veterans Service Organization (VSO)?
- Typology of the VSO Sector
- Trends in the VSO Sector
- What VSOs Do
- Opportunities and Challenges of VSO Collaboration
- Forming a Collaboration with a VSO
- Examples of VSO-Community Partnerships

[Margie] Absolutely.

Thank you very much, Erich. It's very fitting that this session takes place during the week of Memorial Day. And I know that many of you, particularly those in the world of Senior Corps and VISTA, have been working with Veteran Service Organizations and serving with and serving veterans and military families for a very, very long time. This webinar is part of a series of webinars that we're sharing with you at the end of each month so that everyone in the national service world who isn't quite as familiar with some of the groups and priorities and issues of veterans and military families can learn new information that will help them to be successful in their programs. You know that this is a priority for the Corporation, and it's largely a priority because we're going to be seeing the return of many of our veterans in the next couple of years, and their families are currently in need of support.

So the timing of this webinar and this whole emphasis is very, very important. This call is really -- and I'm interested in this poll because you can see that there are quite a few folks who aren't familiar with Veterans Service Organization.

So we're kind of go through -- this is a primer -- the basics about what they are, kind of their characteristics, the trends currently in those organizations, the opportunities and challenges for collaboration with them. And I know this is important, in particular for the folks in Senior Corps because many of you are lining up your programs in this direction in the coming year. And also, our friends, Theresa and Bob, are going to talk a little bit about how do you actually form a collaboration with a VSO and what are some examples of what that might look like.

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Workshop Outcomes

- **As a result of this session, you will be able to:**
 - Define what constitutes a “veterans service organization.”
 - Better understand the purposes and activities of VSOs.
 - Imagine possible collaborations with VSOs.
 - Gain the knowledge and confidence to approach VSOs for potential collaborations.

We hope that at the end of this hour you'll have a sense of what a Veterans Service Organization is and isn't, what their purposes are so that you can decide what lines up with your work, and then imagine possible collaborations with VSOs and kind of know what the immediate next step is.

So thank you very much, and I'm really looking forward to learning with you today. I'd like to turn it over now to our colleagues, and I believe this would be Theresa or Bob.

What is a Veterans Service Organization?

- **Private nonprofit organizations.**
- **Exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)19 of the Internal Revenue Code.**
- **Organized in the United States.**
- **Membership is “supermajority”: past or present members of the US Armed Forces (USAF), military cadets, and/or relatives of members of the USAF.**

[Theresa] Yes, thank you, Margie. Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you again for taking time to participate, and I'd like to give a special thank you, as Margie said, as we are in Memorial Day week, a special thank you to all the veterans that are on the phone.

Thank you so much for all your service to our country.

So what is a Veterans Service Organization?

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You hear that term a lot and hear it kind of bantered around a lot, but sometimes it's kind of confusing on what a Veterans Service Organization actually is. VSOs are private non-profit organizations that have been designated as 501(c)19 by IRS and are organized in the U.S. The organization is comprised of past or present members of the U.S. Armed Forces, military cadets, and/or relatives of members of the Armed Forces.

Some examples would be the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars, or Disabled American Veterans.

**What is a Veterans Service Organization?
(cont.)**

- **No part of earnings may benefit any private shareholder or individual.**
- **It must be operated exclusively for one or more stated purposes.**
- **Auxiliaries, trusts, and foundations of VSOs are also exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)19.**

So, as with any non-profit, no part of the organization's earnings may benefit a shareholder or individual, and the organizations must operate exclusively for one or more purposes, and we'll talk a little bit about that a little bit later on in the presentation.

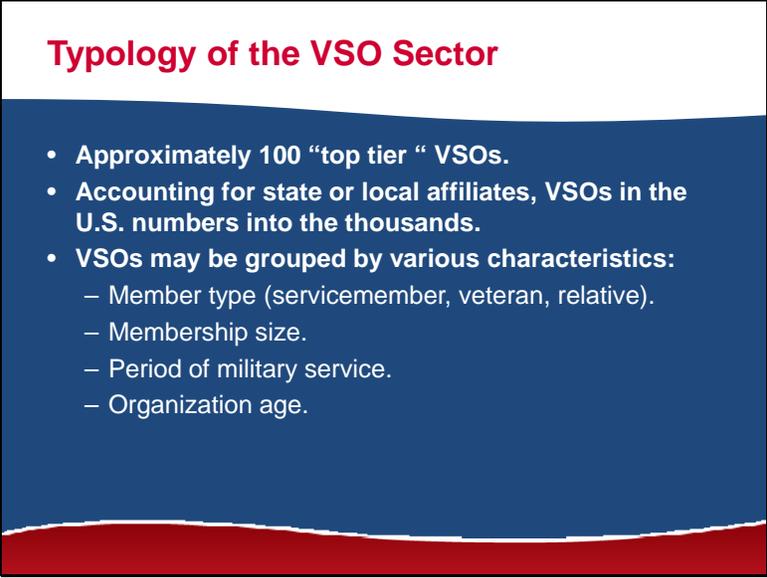
So some of the VSOs also have auxiliaries. They might have a trust. They might also have a foundation that helps them provide resources for programs and services, and if they do, those are also all classified as 501(c)19.

**What is a Veterans Service Organization?
(cont.)**

- **Common meaning of the term “veteran service organization” may encompass organizations that are not strictly 501(c)19 organizations.**
- **Some organizations that serve veterans are not VSOs. For example, government agencies and veterans service providers that are not membership organizations.**

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So, again, I said a lot of times you hear the term Veteran Service Organization that's applied to kind of the all encompassing organizations that are providing services to veterans and military families, but only those that have received the distinction as a Veterans Service Organization by IRS are actually what we call a "VSO." For example, some government agencies or service providers that are not membership based, maybe like Operation Home Front or The Mission Continues, that term is often used to refer to those organizations but they're not an actual VSO by definition.



Typology of the VSO Sector

- Approximately 100 “top tier “ VSOs.
- Accounting for state or local affiliates, VSOs in the U.S. numbers into the thousands.
- VSOs may be grouped by various characteristics:
 - Member type (servicemember, veteran, relative).
 - Membership size.
 - Period of military service.
 - Organization age.

So some of the topology of the VSO sector. There are approximately 100 top-tier VSOs, and when you account for their state and local affiliates, the numbers in the U.S. are well into the thousands. Generally VSOs can be grouped by some of their shared characteristics. You might get membership type, is the membership comprised of service members themselves like with VFW or Disabled American Veterans, or are they relative veterans like American Legion Auxiliary and VFW Auxiliary. What is their membership size?

Are they a large organization like the American Legion with over 3 million members nationwide, or are they smaller in size like maybe the Polish Legion of American Veterans that have very limited membership based upon the characteristics of the members themselves?

Or they also can be grouped by the period of military service like Vietnam veterans or Iraq veterans, World War II veterans, or by the organization age. Organizations like the American Legion and VFW have been in existence for over 90 years, so you can see there is a wide range of different characteristics that Veteran Service Organizations share. And so I'll turn it over to Bob now to talk a little bit more about some the trends.

Trends in the VSO Sector

- Aging and declining memberships in many VSOs.
- Increased demand in services from VSOs with USAF and USAF relative membership.
- Some VSOs modernizing to appeal to new generation of servicemembers and veterans.
- Organizations emerging to support new generation of servicemembers and veterans.

[Bob] Hello, everyone. I hope I am being heard. I see my speaker says I'm speaking now, so, again, good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. Appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about some of my experience with the VSO.

The American Legion Auxiliary is affiliated with the American Legion, which is a congressionally chartered VSO and also we have IRS status 501c19.

So hopefully my remarks today give you a window in the VSO world from someone who works directly with one.

So some of the trends that are happening in the VSO sector, currently there are some deficit-based trends and some asset-based trends. One of the trends that people probably are well aware of just by the visual example that we see in the media around veteran groups is an aging membership or some of the memberships declining. That has to do with somewhat what Theresa was mentioning about age of some of our organizations. American Legion, for example, was formed in World War I, so World War I veterans have passed, but there are certainly plenty of World War II veterans. But we have had veterans throughout our nation's history, and therefore, a lot of older people because we have been in service since the Revolutionary War.

So that's one dynamic going on, and particularly the appearance of a veterans group may look older than the full membership, and that's partly due to cultural situations and how our society has changed from being group public events to online social media, "bowling alone" kind of moment.

So, again, some of the visual doesn't necessarily reflect reality. But nonetheless, it's a trend to be aware of as you're doing your planning. Also, I mean some of the aging is due to -- I mean the organization ages and they die out because the war period that the organization represents has concluded its lifespan so to speak.

I remember last year the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association had its last commemoration on Pearl Harbor Day, and, why? Because there are very few members left to sustain the organization, so that's something to be aware of.

On the other side, there are a greater sense of need from VSOs. That's because we have a new generation of veterans. Of course we have veterans, every day of the year someone becomes a veteran. I think we're, again, familiar with the idea there's a lot of people becoming veterans currently because so many have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. But we also have people who leave active duty on a daily

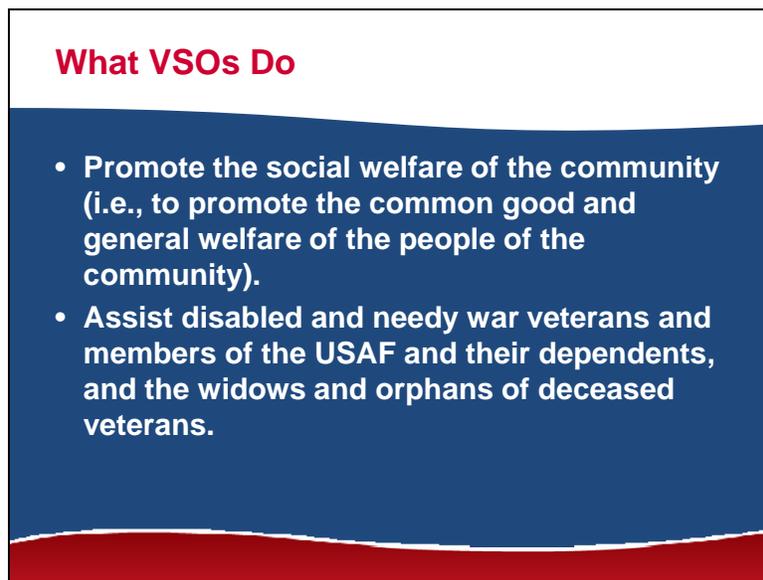
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basis that haven't been deployed overseas. But the bottom line is that there is a heightened number of veterans because of the wars that we're in and exiting, and consequently there is increased demand for resources and services from VSOs.

When you see on the slide "USAF," that's referring to "United States Armed Forces", not solely United States Air Force.

The third is that the organizations are typically trying to modernize to respond to the current pool of veterans and make their resources and services available remotely and electronically and in other ways that are friendly to help people live and learn in the 21st Century. And then as Theresa highlighted, there are certainly a number of new organizations emerging that support service members and veterans that didn't exist even five years ago. They may not have formal 501c19 status. They may be seeking that. They may not. It just depends. There's all sorts of legal reasons to do so or not do so and to get charters from Congress. Those are all kind of peripheral.

So I would encourage us to think globally about VSOs. Certainly today we're attending to the 501c19 class, but if a group is serving veterans and feels like calling themselves a Veterans Service Organization and isn't being stopped from doing so by anybody, we can welcome and embrace them as organizations supporting our veterans and our military. Next slide, please.



So Veterans Service Organizations have several purposes. These are defined in the U.S. Code as the criteria that an organization has to have in place in order to be qualified as a 501c19 Veterans Service Organization.

So I thought that would be a helpful framework for analyzing what Veterans Service Organizations do. And so I will go through these slides and give an example or two for each. And if any of you on the phone want to comment and [send in through the] Chat [panel] an example of a Veterans Service Organization you're aware of that corresponds with these bullets, please do, and you can share that information with your peers.

So one of the primary functions of a VSO is actually pretty broad. It promotes social welfare of the community.

So that's in statute as something that VSOs are entitled to do. As you will see, that's a broader purpose than simply supporting veterans service members or relatives of veterans and service members. The takeaway from that point bullet point is that, A) historically, many Veteran Service Organizations have

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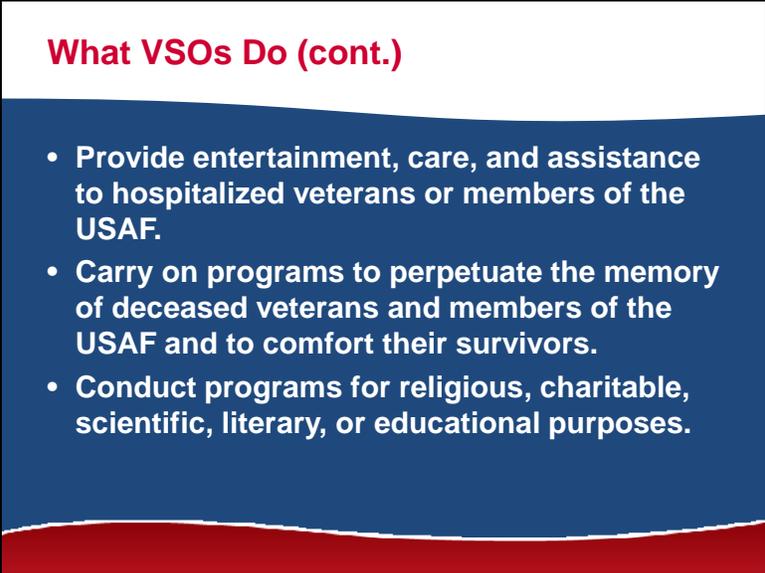
engaged in community service beyond taking care of their own, so to speak, and b) that might provide some opportunities for collaboration with organizations who are participating on this call today that have a purpose or mission beyond veterans or military only.

In other words, VSOs can be really effective community partners. And I want to give an example of this, is Amvets. They're a VSO that's open to anyone who is currently serving or has honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces from World War II to the present, and one thing they do is they encourage their posts and departments to volunteer and support their local Special Olympic chapters.

So, obviously, some veterans may participate in Special Olympics, but Special Olympics is for all Olympians with special capabilities, so that's an example of a VSO supporting a community effort. Another example of what VSOs can do is assist disabled and needy war veterans and members of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents and the widows and orphans of deceased veterans.

So that would be like your classic understanding of what a VSO does, and I must say that more of the VSOs are returning to this focus, more concretely than in peacetime periods. Where sometimes VSOs feel like they were looking for something to do, now we have a heightened awareness of the needs of the veteran and military community again, and VSOs themselves are experiencing that and focusing more on taking care of their own, so to speak.

An example of this in action is Blinded Veterans Association, and they're a VSO that formed to assist veterans and their families challenged by blindness, and they have a peer support program that connects combat-blinded veterans of prior war periods with newly blinded veterans who have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. So there is an example for you. Next slide, please.



What VSOs Do (cont.)

- **Provide entertainment, care, and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the USAF.**
- **Carry on programs to perpetuate the memory of deceased veterans and members of the USAF and to comfort their survivors.**
- **Conduct programs for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes.**

A third purpose of VSOs is to provide entertainment, care, and assistance to hospitalized veterans or members of the United States Armed Forces. A prominent example of that is United Service Organizations or USO. They're a congressionally chartered private non-profit organization, and among their many programs, they organize celebrity entertainment tours to boost the morale of troops in times of peace and war.

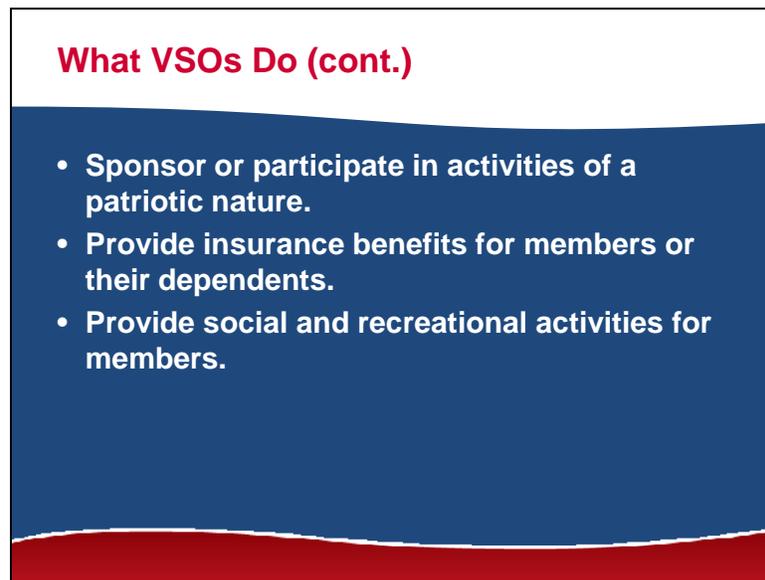
So that hits on the entertainment piece. A number of VSOs have concrete programs where they mobilize their members to be volunteers to hospitalized veterans in VA medical centers or home-based care to caregivers, respite care for caregivers, or home-based services to veterans who don't need hospitalization, so that's how that bullet becomes alive.

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Another prominent function for VSOs is they carry on programs to perpetuate the memory of deceased veterans and members of the United States Armed Forces and to comfort their survivors. An example of that is Gold Star Wives of America. They're an organization of widows and widowers whose spouses died while on active duty in the military service or as the result of a military service-connected cause. And that organization assists widows and widowers in understanding and obtaining benefits provided by Congress for survivors.

Another example of VSO activities is, again, a broader purpose than just veteran or military specific. They are authorized to conduct programs for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes. That's probably language that covers all non-profits, so I can't say that for sure, but that's a pretty broad umbrella that I'm sure 501c3s slip into that category.

So, again, 501c19s can do more than just military and veteran, although we're emphasizing that their primary activity is towards veteran and military. An example of this is the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and they offer the Voice of Democracy, a scholarship program that's an audio essay contest for high school students, and through that program, they provide more than \$3 million in scholarships, so give you an example of how VSOs are supporting the larger community. Next slide, please.



Another activity of VSOs is to sponsor or participate in activities of a patriotic nature. Oh, gosh, I can't imagine a VSO that doesn't do that. And if you saw any of the patriotic observances of this past Memorial Day, you would have seen veteran groups marching in parades and participating in ceremonies at cemeteries and public memorials and participating in that fashion.

Another activity VSOs can do is provide insurance benefits to their members. An example of this is Retired and Enlisted Association, and they're organized to enhance quality of life for uniformed services and enlisted personnel, their families and survivors, and that organization organizes a package of insurance options. That's probably an area that's not going to be an area for great collaboration [for your organizations] unless you're an organization that provides insurance that wants to pair up with an organization that can offer it. But it's an example of the type of support that VSOs are authorized to provide their own membership.

And finally, VSOs are authorized to provide social and recreational activities for members. An example of this is the Marine Corps League. They're a membership organization of active duty and veterans of the United States Marine Corps, and they organize birthday balls in locations around the country to celebrate the birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

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Sometimes the social and recreational activity gets a little pooh-pooed by the general community that, "Well that's just a group that gets together to drink" is sometimes said about some Veterans Service Organizations, particularly those that have locations in the community that have a hospitality function. And my response back when I hear that kind of remark is that, a), those hospitality events are fundraisers for the organization – they use those funds earned from those activities to support their activities with veterans in the larger community -- and second, it's important to have the social and recreational opportunities within the VSOs, as in any organization, because that builds bonds of solidarity that allow people when they're doing service and other mission work to do it in the spirit of happiness, and, you know, happiness and comfort.

So there's nothing wrong with social and recreational activities. And as I said, they're often either connected to a service event or used to fund raise for service events.

I see one really good question about this set of slides [in the Chat panel], so I'll answer it now. It says, "Are VSOs required to perform a certain number of these activities or are they just general guidelines?"

The answer is they are general guidelines. There is not a requirement that a VSO complete all or a percentage of them in order to be constituted as a VSO, but they would need to at least do one, otherwise they would most likely just be a regular non-profit.

Okay. I think if there are other questions at this time about what VSOs do or anyone on the phone would like to share an example from their community, please feel free to do that in the Chat feature. We will be opening the call at the end for questions, so if you want to verbalize some of your thoughts about what VSOs do in your community, you can hold your remarks for that time. Next slide I think is -- this is me still. Okay.



VSO Collaborations - Opportunities

- **Memberships comprised of servicemembers, veterans, and their families.**
- **Understanding of USAF and veterans needs.**
- **Array of programs and services for USAF and veterans.**
- **Sterling reputations in community.**
- **Highly committed members.**
- **Family and friend networks.**

So as we tried to set a little context of who VSOs are and also the type of service work they do in their community or nationally. Now we will highlight a little bit about some of the opportunities to collaborate and what some of the benefits are, as well as the challenges to doing so.

So in terms of opportunities, and this is probably where people really want to zone in on today because you're all here to learn about collaboration and how you can partner up with Veterans Service Organizations to accomplish national service objectives that are in the Serve America Act and the Corporation Strategic Plan and in your own projects and performance measures and things, so these are a set of bullet points that highlight some of the advantages to linking up to a Veterans Service Organization to help you meet the other purposes that you have.

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One is the membership themselves. VSOs, by definition, are comprised of service members, veterans, or their families. Now, there are Veterans Service Organizations that are just for service members not for veterans, so even though the term is "Veterans Service Organization," the membership could be active service members only or Guard members only and things like that, so I wish they had called it "Military and Veterans Service Organization," but nonetheless, be aware that the term "VSO" does often include people currently in service, and their families, as well as people who have served. But the important point for you all is if you're looking to do work with veterans or with the military community, linking up to a VSO is a great way to find your customer base.

The second advantage that a VSO brings into a collaboration is that because of their membership and their history and their connection to the military and veteran sector, they know something about the Armed Forces or they know something about veterans. That's really critical for those of us in national service who want to respond to the needs and challenges and assets of that community but don't know a lot about them. And so we can have a lot of goodwill without a lot of knowledge, and so it's bringing you all to goodwill and matching it to knowledge of an organization that has its roots in this community. And as I hope to demonstrate from my previous comments that VSOs offer an array of programs and services for service members and their veterans, and some of them are educational related, employment related, health-care related. Others are social and recreational. All of them have a mission of service and so what each one offers varies.

Some of them offer a boutique set of programs very specific to their own membership, where there won't be good opportunities to link to that. But others are offering programs and services available to the wider community.

So plenty of options, potentially, to plug into that's based on what they're already doing. Also, VSOs typically have a sterling reputation in the community. I think that's a fallout or a spinoff of the generally high regard reputation that veterans and service members have among the American people, and so we feel pretty good about our troops and our veterans and are proud of their service and grateful for their service and view them as outstanding citizens, that parlays into reputation of the organizations that represent them.

So associating with them is typically a safe -- you know, is to feel safer to organizations that don't know that much about veterans, but, yeah, if I latch onto their efforts, I'm probably in good stead. Also, we feel pretty proud that our members are highly committed to the causes, both advocacy, which, you know, deal with service organizations on the phone, but the advocacy function that many of the VSOs perform does create a culture of commitment and commitment over the long term and stick-to-it-ness, and that flows into the commitment to service as well, and also commitment to service over long term, we tend to form relationships and pick programs that stay a while. We don't turn off a lot of light switches. We don't turn a lot on, but we also don't turn a lot off.

So that's the commitment as both of the individual and the organization. And finally, the VSOs often have structured mechanisms to involve whole families in the services and activities; for example, Theresa had mentioned earlier that a number of VSOs have auxiliary, so that was an opportunity for relatives of the eligible member, the eligible veteran or service member to have a role to play in the organization's health and wellbeing. Others of them have clubs or chapters or groups for the young people; for example, the auxiliary has a distinction of a category membership that are called our "junior members," so those are girls that are 18 and younger who are able to affiliate with the auxiliary and have special programming to meet their developmental needs.

So, typically, the VSOs have some ways that family and friends can connect into the VSO's activities, and therefore, by partnering with a Veterans Service Organization you may not get just one volunteer, you may get four or five, depending if you successfully persuaded your target beneficiary or your target volunteer to bring others along with them. Next slide, please.

VSO Collaborations - Challenges

- Decision-making structures with concentration of power in a few individuals.
- Volunteer leadership rotates with frequency.
- Formal policy-setting processes with many stages and deadlines.
- Tendency toward insularity and caution.
- Affiliates have autonomy in programming.

And while that's switching, I do want to acknowledge there are some questions coming in, and we will get to them, so keep firing away. And if Theresa and Margie want to look at them as well and be prepared to respond that's great.

So some of the challenges to working with a Veterans Service Organization, I would like to think these are not challenges unique to our sector, but they definitely are challenges with our sector, so just be aware of them. One is many of the VSOs have decision-making structures that concentrate power in a few individuals and they often have like pretty large consultation bodies representative of, you know, one from each state or so many from each state depending on -- this is at the national level typically. I'm describing that because we have a pretty broad constitution and convention structure and you can't really mobilize a thousand people to make every decision, particularly every big decision. It sometimes gets condensed into a few individuals that really get to call the shots, and they are elected officials. These are non-profits with boards of directors, so to speak. We may not call them that, but these are, you know, organizations that are run and overseen by volunteers.

Some of them have staff. Some of them don't. But there is, you know, a representation of the overall membership making the decision, but sometimes our size or our history, you know, evolved to the point where the decision gets concentrated and not necessarily anybody from the floor can decide to become and move us to collaboration.

So that's probably a safety feature in a good way, but it's one you need to know who the player is. Also, our leadership structures rotate with frequency. Many VSOs just have annual terms for their leadership so typically they have some sort of advancement continuum, so someone who is going to be the leader has additional roles prior to that that are putting them on the pathway to leadership.

So you can, you know, get a flavor or who is going to be making decisions and start influencing them before they're the decider. But when they are the decider, they have this golden moment of opportunity to make their impact, so it's important to recognize the lifecycle of our volunteers.

Also, our VSOs have formal policy setting processes with many stages and deadlines. Again, these organizations typically have a fairly structured and elaborate mechanism for making policy decisions, whether they're called "policy statements" or "resolutions" or "agreements" and however, and they don't just happen by one person deciding that. I mean sometimes I'm contradicting myself I realize. A lot of times the controlling decision of what to bring forward is one or a few people. But sometimes what's brought forward does need to get ratified by the entire organization represented in some large elected body, and so that kind of effort has to go through a number of stages. And so it's really important, as

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you're thinking about collaboration is figuring out, well, how big is this going to be for us and for them, and therefore, how big of a decision is this going to be for our VSO collaborator and even from there then, how much lead time are we going to have to build in to make sure all the process stages are completed?

Another caution is that the VSOs tend toward insularity. I think that's somewhat, again, based on the population that we represent, and probably a number of you have been struggling if you're in the civilian spotlight, how come these groups won't work with us?

And some of that is because there were times in our history where the American people generally weren't just tripping over themselves to take care of veterans and service members, and certainly the military community has a structure in place when you're in service of a lot of support for itself, and so the tendency has been for the military and veteran and community to take care of itself and hide its problems, so to speak, and so that manifests itself in our organizations as well. I think the really big push coming from so many quarters of society, including the Obama Administration, but the Corporation and on and on, the media, the celebrity, everyone saying let's all work together and be helpful is hopefully changing that dynamic.

And also, the last point in terms of a challenge is it's maybe a blessing for you all working locally or it may not if you're a national group. It kind of cuts both ways. But often the VSO structure or the affiliates, the local chapters or the state chapters are legally autonomous from the headquarters, and so just because headquarter suggests you do something doesn't mean everybody at the ground is required to. Also, that means that sometimes local activities may bubble but not get a lot of national support for them because they weren't national initiatives.

So, again, that could be a benefit to get something done a little quicker or it could be a deficit, depending on what's the relationship of the local chapter to its headquarters. And you will want to kind of explore that as you're approaching collaboration conversations with the VSO at the local level of kind of get a sense of how obligated they are to their national office, and that may indicate whether they're going to be able to participate or not. Okay.

So I think we're moving on. Next slide.

[Erich] And actually, I'm going to jump in real quick, Bob. This is Erich. As you mentioned, we have had some questions come in. We thought maybe before Theresa starts talking about forming collaboration with VSOs we could try to take a few of those.

[Bob] Yeah. Good idea. So the first question -- can you moderate those, Erich?

[Erich] Certainly. And as Bob mentioned earlier, please do continue to send in your questions via the Chat. When you do, please send it to all participants. That way all of our presenters can see it.

There was one from Martin, which I don't think all of our presenters saw, so I'll just read it. He asks, "How involved are VSOs in war memorial restoration activities? Is anyone taking the lead nationally?"

[Bob] I'm not aware of a national movement on that. I field calls sometimes from organizations that are wanting that in their community, and we connect up to their local chapter or their state chapter and look toward that way. Obviously some of the major national monuments such as the World War II Memorial and Vietnam Memorial, the kind of national signature memorials have had a lot of support from national Veterans Service Organizations, but typically the memorials that are set up in parks and plazas and communities around the country come from a community-wide mobilization that includes the VSOs from that local community. Theresa, do you have any observations on that as well?

[Theresa] Yeah, I would agree that from my experience and knowledge, I mean those kind of activities are really driven at the local level. You might check with the local mayor's office or Chamber of Commerce. They possibly would have kind of, you know, contact information on who to get involved with on that. I know in the community, my hometown, we have a veterans memorial that the VSOs kind of

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drove the process, but it also involved the mayor's office, and then there's a small historical museum in the community, and they were involved, but the local VSOs kind of collaboratively led the process and are the ones that, you know, are in charge of keeping it, you know, cleaned and everything.

So, you know, that might be a starting point for you at your local mayor's office or with the Chamber of Commerce to see if they can give you the information on kind of who is leading the charge on that.

[Erich] Thank you. Why don't we take a question from Paula Burnett. This sounds like it might be more in Margie's or Theresa's wheelhouse, "Could VSOs count as RSVP stations for Corporation programming, or are they simply to be utilized as a collaborator?"

[Theresa] I think that's a great question. And, actually, there are some RSVP programs that are partnering with Veterans Service Organizations in their community as a station. I know there are some that are working with, for example, Disabled American Veterans and counting that as a station where they're providing volunteers to serve as transportation drivers, partnering with DAV. We also have RSVP programs that are working with other organizations, utilizing their volunteers to outreach to veterans regarding access to services. We have one program that was piloted in Washington state actually with Department of Labor Veterans programming and then also involved the American Legion and RSVP volunteers, and the volunteers were contacting veterans within the community that information had been provided to them by Department of Labor, and the RSVP volunteers, in fact, do make calls and do outreach to those veterans to see what kind of services that they were actually in need of. It actually started as trying to contact them regarding, you know, like if they were unemployed or underemployed, but then as the process went on, it grew into more of, you know, what are the actual services they need? They may need more than assistance with employment training. So it kind of morphed into this larger program.

So, yes, I mean it could go both ways. I mean it certainly presents a great opportunity for an RSVP program to work with a Veterans Service Organization as a work station. But, you know, it also could be just an opportunity for collaboration depending on what your individual community needs are and what your program needs are.

[Erich] Great. There was a question from Nicole about asking if there are survey results outlining number of veterans who served with CNCS programs in recent years.

[Bob] Margie, you may be able to answer that. I do believe there is some information about the number of AmeriCorps or national service participants who indicated veteran status.

[Margie] Sure. Yeah, we're in the process of collecting that information as kind of a baseline because it is a priority for us, and I can tell you, for example, that we have 78 VISTA projects that focus on veterans and military families with 315 VISTA members, so doing that work. We haven't captured that data in the past, so it's only recently that we have begun to capture who of the members and volunteers are veterans themselves. So when I get that information, I will put it on the forum attached to this webinar so that other folks can see it, okay? So I don't have that off the top of my head. It's something that we've been trying to get.

[Bob] Great. Also, I just want to highlight that there have been a number of efforts in the Veteran and Military Family Knowledge Network, and that's probably the best place that it will all land where those of us who've been successful in identifying some veterans or inactive military service members such as a Guard member who's not on active duty or reservist. We've been informally starting to pull together some suggestions on strategies for recruitment.

So look to the Knowledge Network as a future resource for those kind of tips and suggestions. I mean I don't think there's ever going to be an official publication of how to recruit a veteran into national service, but some of us that are either doing so intentionally or lucky to have that happen because of the focus of our project are trying to put forward some recommendations for others of you. And I agree . . .

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[Theresa] No, I'm sorry. I was just going to say that I -- just to piggyback off of what Margie was saying about the data collection, that we are working on baseline figures now, and then for those of you that are Corporation grantees and will be implementing performance measures, one of the performance measures is the number of veterans that are participating.

So as those numbers start rolling up in the next few years, we will be able to have more data that will go from the baseline that we're working on right now.

[Erich] Okay, why don't we take one more question and then launch into the next section. Thanks, folks, for sending in the questions. We'll try to get to as many as we can in this session. If there's some we can't get to, we'll save a transcript of our chat and follow up with you afterwards. But I think this might be a good one because both Annette and Kareen mentioned this idea of VSOs maybe being in a little bit of competition and that they're competing for program participants. So are there any suggestions on how to reframe the relationship so as to create a more collaborative and less competitive environment?

[Bob] Yeah. I mean that's a fair concern. You may want to distinguish what legal services you offer compared to what a Veterans Service Organization offers. The Veterans Service Organizations that are chartered by Congress have some permission and also responsibility to represent veterans in benefit cases before the Department of Veterans Affairs. But they're not necessarily litigation, so you may want to discern or differentiate between public benefit assistance and appeal from other -- that's not -- that doesn't have to be legal aid.

So I don't know, you know your community -- how you understand legal services more than I do, but I could see why VSOs would feel a little turfey about that if they're already -- if they're also responsible for providing that in their communities.

So you may want to have a, you know, upfront conversation about, well, what are some things that you all don't do that we could do, or also do you have more need than you can support? Why don't you send us some of your overflow cases. Those would be two strategies I could come up with. I think this other one from --

[Erich] I'm sorry, go ahead, Bob.

[Bob] I said, I also think -- you probably ought to address this Theresa Vulta question because it attaches to the other one about RSVP stations.

[Theresa] Yeah, that stations must be 501(c)3 if municipalities are proprietary health care. As we are moving to increase our collaboration with VSOs, I will get some clarification from Senior Corps. I know that we have a representative from Senior Corps on the session, but I don't believe that she's able to respond to a question at this point in time. So I will get some clarification on that, and then we'll post it in with the follow-up questions that get posted with this on the forum.

Forming Collaborations with VSOs

- Know your own intentions of the collaboration.
- Identify appropriate VSO partner(s).
- Identify the proper point of contact.
- Make organization introductions.
- Develop an explicit project proposal.
- Formalize the collaboration.

[Erich] Great, thank you. Bob started to touch on this. So how do you approach these organizations as potential partners? So with that, Theresa, do you want to lead us in our discussion of forming collaborations with VSOs?

[Theresa] Yes, thank you, Erich.

So our next section we're going to, as Erich said, focus a little bit on collaborating with the VSOs. We're going to touch on each one of these bullet points individually, but some of the topics we're going to cover are know what your intentions of the collaboration are, how to identify appropriate VSO partners, how to make -- who's identifying the proper point of contact, how to make organization introductions, developing your project proposal, and how to formalize the collaboration.

Forming Collaborations with VSOs

- Know your own intentions of the collaboration.
 - Are you seeking to engage VSO members as volunteers in your organization's own service work?
 - Are you seeking to match your members/volunteers to VSO service projects?
 - Is there a specific human need your organization addresses?
 - At what level are you seeking a collaboration?

[Bob] So the first step is, know what you want to accomplish, know your own intentions. I think there's always a danger when there's some new theme of the day or the year when everyone -- I mean, you know, we can be a little bit honest on this phone call. A lot of organizations are reading our FPs, and not just in the Corporation, but in other sectors where veteran and military is highlighted as a priority or

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preference because of the era of time we're in in our country's history. It's all welcome, but it means everybody saying I've got to do something, I've got to do something. And so there's always a danger in that to make up an idea just to get in the pipeline, and so I really counsel ourselves as the Auxiliary, but also anyone who wants to listen to me, that we still need to be intentional about what are we hoping to accomplish for the target population so that we make sure that those investment, whether it's private or public investment, is used the best. And so it's really important, before you approach a veteran service organization is get a handle on what you hope from that.

So that might be you need more volunteers in your organization, "Hey, this is a group that has a lot of people who like to volunteer and do service, so I may want to approach a VSO to see if they'd want to provide volunteers to your own service work." You may want to be looking at where you have a pool of volunteers where you want to match them to people with needs and think that there may be some veterans or service members with the need that your members or volunteers or staff are able to address so that you would want to match up around that. It might be kind of piggybacking on the question about legal services, meaning that you have a real niche area that has some specialty or expertise that you're pretty sure that the Veterans Service Organization itself doesn't offer or when it has the capability of offering.

So, again, kind of going beyond matching just general volunteers to general service needs is kind of laser beaming in on your specific human service capability. And then the fourth consideration is where are you hoping to engage, are you looking at a local collaboration in a specific town or city, are you looking at something regional, are you looking at statewide, or are you an organization seeking to influence activity across state boundaries?

So those would be the four things I can think of to ask yourselves, and not just ask yourselves but make a decision on. I wouldn't be so firm in your decision that you can't go to another place if your collaborating or potential wants to go somewhere else, but just to call someone up and say, "Hey, I'm here to help," doesn't really get you very far.

So those are some slides to emphasize that. The next slide is Theresa's.

Forming Collaborations with VSOs

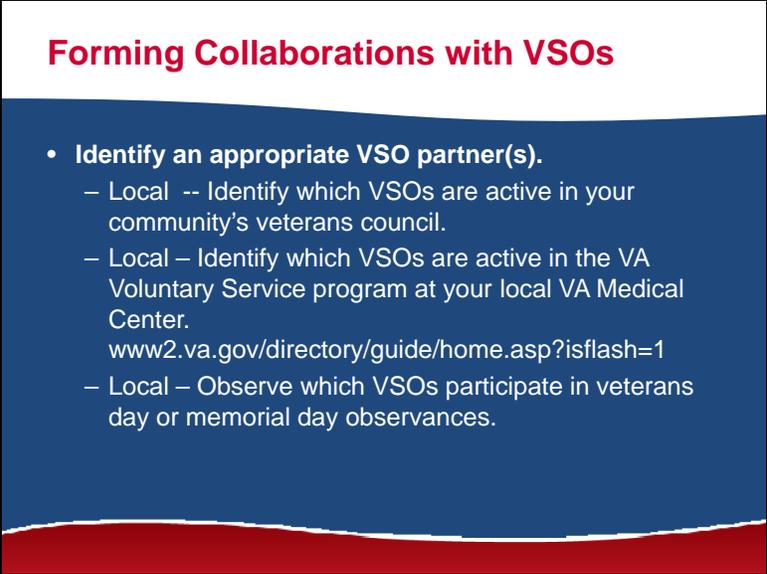
- **Identify an appropriate VSO partner(s).**
 - National – Search for VSOs recognized by the VA at <http://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>
 - National – Ask for assistance from ServiceNation's Mission Serve . <http://www.servicenation.org/pages/mission-serve1>

[Theresa] So how to identify an appropriate partner. This question comes up a lot. We feel that in the offices now that there's as an agency-wide larger focus on partnering with, providing services to veterans, that's one of the biggest things; so where can I find Veterans Service Organizations in my community. You heard Bob talk a little bit about the structure of Veterans Service Organizations. Most of them have a national organization and then broken down into maybe a state affiliate, and then even at the local level.

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So in your local community, you know, one of the first places to start is, you know, I mean it sounds pretty rudimentary, but just the phone book. I mean what are the organizations listed in your own individual community. You might also check with maybe the mayor's office or with the Chamber of Commerce. They may know kind of who those community leaders are. Typically, the leaders in the Veterans Service Organizations, especially in the smaller rural communities, are usually the leaders within the community themselves, so that may kind of direct you on where to go. I mean some organizations, depending on the community, you know, maybe the American Legion might be more active in one community. In another community it might be the VFW might be the one that's most active in the community. If you have a VA medical center within your service area you might also touch base with the director of voluntary service. Typically, they're going to know who the leaders are because those individuals are active in the community. And then also -- can we go back to the previous slide -- also, we put up here a link to search on the VA website. They have where you can search Veterans Service Organizations.

So you can put that in and check for organizations within your community. And then also (inaudible-technical difficulty) serve compiled a database they have available that you can look and (inaudible-technical difficulty) community (inaudible-technical difficulty). Okay. Now next slide.



Forming Collaborations with VSOs

- **Identify an appropriate VSO partner(s).**
 - Local -- Identify which VSOs are active in your community's veterans council.
 - Local – Identify which VSOs are active in the VA Voluntary Service program at your local VA Medical Center.
www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1
 - Local – Observe which VSOs participate in veterans day or memorial day observances.

[Erich] Yeah, and I think we had Bob for this slide, but Theresa touched on some of these resources as well, such as the VA medical center. Anything else you might want to add, Bob, about identifying potential VSO partners?

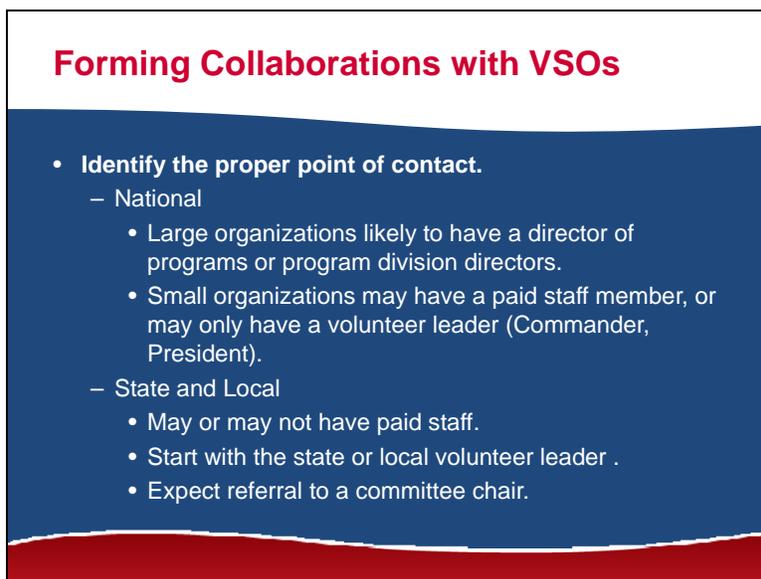
[Bob] Yes. Every county has a veterans service officer. So if you don't know where to start, you could also go to your county veterans service office. Now those are typically public employees of some entity in the county government, but they would also be a great resource to say, "Well, who are the non-profits that are active, who's the VSO -- who's the county veteran's service officer make referrals to for veteran needs that the county veterans service officer isn't able to meet themselves?"

Also, all the workforce centers in the country -- not all, most -- most workforce investment centers or workforce readiness centers, job centers, whatever they're called in your community, that's part of the Workforce Investment Act One-Stop Network. They typically have employees there that are assigned to supporting veterans called a "local veteran employment representatives," so that would be another key informant that could have a good lay of the land about who are the veterans service organizations that are active.

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Also, I always encourage people to go to an actual commemorative event and see who's marching down the road. If it's a group of two people holding a banner and then there's another one behind that's 100, you're maybe going to get a little more action from the group of 100 than the group with the two.

So some of it's just actually looking at what their hats say and visiting with somebody after the event is over and when people are breaking up from the event and introducing yourselves. I think we can go to the next slide.



Forming Collaborations with VSOs

- **Identify the proper point of contact.**
 - National
 - Large organizations likely to have a director of programs or program division directors.
 - Small organizations may have a paid staff member, or may only have a volunteer leader (Commander, President).
 - State and Local
 - May or may not have paid staff.
 - Start with the state or local volunteer leader .
 - Expect referral to a committee chair.

[Theresa] So once you've kind of identified an organization in your community, then how do you get into who the actual proper point of contact is?

As I said, most of these organizations have, on the national level, they're going to likely have a national director or programs or a division of program directors that contacted them. They could potentially, you know, hopefully get you down to the point of contact in your local community.

Smaller organizations may have a paid staff or they might just have a volunteer leader. At the local level, typically, these organizations (inaudible) a president a president or a commander at the local level, and that's going to be your point of contact on the same level. They may or may not have (inaudible) they might have (inaudible) -- they might have a -- one paid director that kind of oversees programs within the state, or again, it might be a volunteer leader. And if you want to start at that state level, then they can provide you contact through the local level, and once you do that you're going to get referred to a committee chair. (Inaudible) be in charge at the local level you're going to start with a, you know, a public relations or some type of program committee chair, and then they're going to -- as Bob said, you know, the structure, it takes a while sometimes to work through their hierarchy, so you may start with that committee chair. Then they're going to take that information back to their local committee and probably present information on your organization.

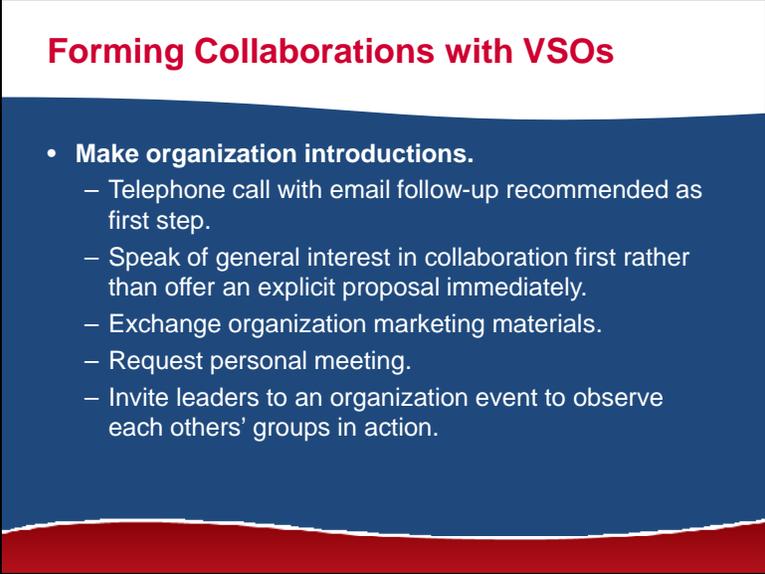
And I think touching on one of the questions that we saw over there [in the Chat] that, you know, they seem to be kind of resistant. Again, it's kind of presenting that one-on-one information to who you are, because we're developing these relationships on a national level, but locally they may not be familiar with who RSVP is or who your specific program that you're affiliated with.

So it's kind of in that introductory thing, that kind of one-on-one, that "here's who we are and here's, you know, the types of programming and organization that we are" and just kind of developing that relationship. And it may take a little time. As Bob said, you know, it's been kind of insular that they've operated that they've been providing the services and the thought that, "Wow, here's a whole other group

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of volunteers that might want to come in and participate with us," that's new to them, so it may take you a little time to develop that relationship, but come from the standpoint that your program may have been around for 30 years, but that doesn't mean that they're familiar with who you are. I mean you're learning who they are and they're getting information about you, about your program, so approach it from that standpoint, not, you know, coming in from the standpoint that, "Well, you should know who we are," because they may not.

So, you know, it's really all about developing those relationships and starting from there. We can move to the next one.



Forming Collaborations with VSOs

- **Make organization introductions.**
 - Telephone call with email follow-up recommended as first step.
 - Speak of general interest in collaboration first rather than offer an explicit proposal immediately.
 - Exchange organization marketing materials.
 - Request personal meeting.
 - Invite leaders to an organization event to observe each others' groups in action.

[Bob] Theresa's introduced this nicely, and that's about introducing one's self first. Again, know what you want, but don't necessarily put it on the table immediately. I encourage in these kind of new starts of telephone calls, if you can find the telephone number for the local contact, if all you're given by your referring source of e-mail are of, honest to God, postal mail address, then use those methods, but if you have an opportunity to make a personal, "Hello, could I visit with you in the near future about this," and so that would be I think a smoother way to go than a cold call e-mail to some organization in the community from another that's likely never heard of each other.

Definitely, Veterans Service Organizations typically don't know what this whole thing is, "national service." I mean veterans have been -- the older ones have been doing this since World War I, so this idea that there's like a whole thing called "national service" and there's a movement and there's a federal agency, that's unfamiliar to them, and not universally, but it may be unfamiliar to many.

So don't assume that pre-knowledge, that, "Oh, we've been an RSVP agency since the Johnson Administration." They're like, "I never heard of RSVP or VISTA or Foster Grandparent, I don't know what that is."

The other thing is that on the other hand, some veterans may be participants in national service programs, and so if you know who's in your volunteer base, figure out if any of them belong to any of these groups, use them as your link and your ambassador. Bring them along as an example of, "Hey, here's someone who belongs to you and belongs to us."

So I definitely recommend knowing what you want to achieve, or at least -- and not knowing for sure but having some handle on it so it's not just a, "Hey, we ought to know each other just so we know each other," but not becoming so specific at the outset that it feels intimidating.

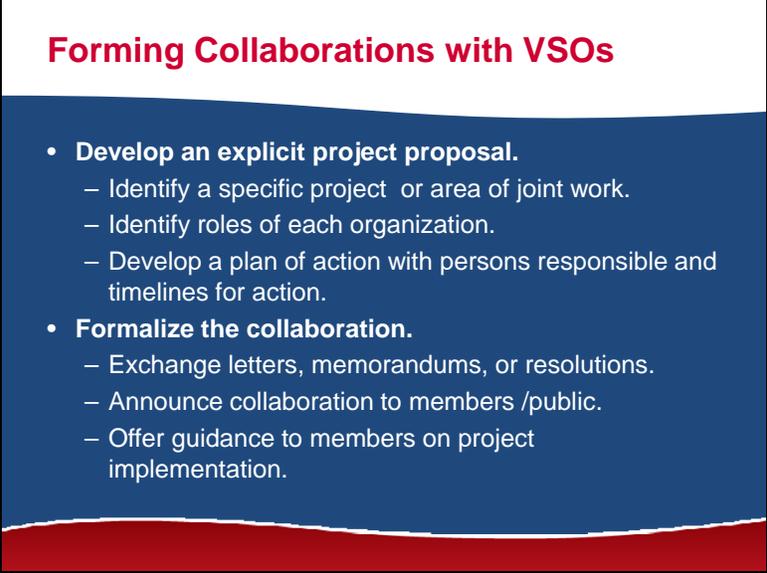
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So that's why I would encourage a personal meeting.

And also a great way to introduce them to your organization is to invite them to an activity that you have; so if you're having a community event where there's some opportunity to recognize leaders from the community on a podium or a rostrum or a guest table or whatever, that's a great way to do something that's facilitated and soft.

The other is veteran groups typically have members that are prepared to do flag presentations and color guard moments. So if you see an opportunity in one of your events to incorporate that into the session, it's a nice way to make an introduction of your organization to a veterans group around a service they provide in the community, and it may not be about the service that you're seeking to collaborate on, but it taps their capability and strength and gets them in your midst.

Next slide.



Forming Collaborations with VSOs

- **Develop an explicit project proposal.**
 - Identify a specific project or area of joint work.
 - Identify roles of each organization.
 - Develop a plan of action with persons responsible and timelines for action.
- **Formalize the collaboration.**
 - Exchange letters, memorandums, or resolutions.
 - Announce collaboration to members /public.
 - Offer guidance to members on project implementation.

[Theresa] Yes, so next just kind of -- as Bob said, identify -- you know, when you're putting together your proposal when you're coming to them, you want to, if possible, identify a specific project or area, not just that, "Hey, we want to work together," but what is the specific activity you have in mind. And also then kind of develop your plan of actions, who's going to be responsible for what, and, if you can, provide a timeline for action. I mean sometimes their decision-making process at a Veterans Service Organization, may take them a while. If you're meeting with a committee chairman, and then they're going to have to take that back to the overall group, and then they're going to have to meet and stuff.

So, you know, if you can develop a specific timeline ahead of time, and then you know that when they're coming in that, you know, if you're looking for, you know, a specific activity and when that's going to take place so that they know that, that can kind of help drive their decision-making process.

And, as Bob said, exchange letters. I mean if you're an RSVP program and want to formalize that with, like, a memorandum or if their organization, they're going to need a resolution or something, and then, you know, by all means, you want to announce the collaboration to the public so that people know that, you know, you're going to be working together. That just provides increased awareness for your program as well as theirs. And if need be, you know, if you're coming, you know, with the proposal and you've got the expertise, then you can offer guidance on how to actually get the project implemented for that.

So we can move on because we're getting close to the time, so we're making sure that, you know, we have time to answer questions or anything.

Examples of Collaborations

So if anybody has an example of collaboration that you've done, if you want to share that in the Chat function so that we can share that with everyone.

Examples of VSO-Community Collaboration

- USO and United Through Reading



[Bob] So while people -- yeah, while people are powering up through that, and I think you may open phones too, but just one example that we put together is to just give you one is that the USO and United Through Reading collaborate.

So USO is a Veterans Service Organization, and United Through Reading is a national non-profit organization, and United Through Reading offers opportunities to connect parents to their children through reading when there's a distance between the parent and the child, and they were doing this work with incarcerated populations to be able to have some engagement with their children and some other family-isolated-type situations. And United Through Reading saw an opportunity for service members and their children to benefit from a similar engagement, and so they have the program model. They have the program model, they have the relationships with booksellers and other providers of books. They have the methods for the technology, but they needed a mechanism to get to the service member population.

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So what better for them than to collaborate with USO, which has over 1,000 locations around the country, including overseas locations, but also domestic where they have direct, daily access to service members.

So that's just a really simple example where one group had a service, one had an interest in expanding that service to the military community, and another organization had access to the military community but didn't have that service, and so they came together and now have a United Through Reading project specifically for service members, so there we go.

So I'll take it back to Erich to tell us how to use the time that remains the best.

[Erich] Sure. And thanks for sharing that great example. And as Bob and Theresa invited you, please do, if you can briefly describe a successful collaboration you yourself are managing or that you know of, we'd love to hear about it in the chat. I think in the short amount of time we have remaining we should maybe go ahead and make sure folks are aware of some resources. And then if folks have a little extra time and if our presenters do as well, we can stick around a little bit after our official end time of 11:30 Pacific.

So let's make sure we leave you with some helpful information. And I think Margie and Bob will lead us through some resources.

For Further Information

- **Bob Reeg, Project Director, American Legion Auxiliary Call to Service Corps, 202.265.7271; rreeg@ALAforVeterans.org; www.ALAforVeterans.org.**
- **Theresa Long, Oklahoma State Director, and CNCS Veterans Liaison, 405.231.5203; tlong@cns.gov; www.nationalservice.org**

[Bob] Right, okay, so there's contact information for both myself and Theresa, so our phone numbers, email addresses and websites are there, so that's pretty clear.

Community Blueprint Summit for Change

- **What:** Intensive learning opportunity for individuals who are interested in enacting community-based solutions to the challenges facing service members, veterans and military families.
- **Who:** Organized by Points of Light as pre-conference to the 2012 National Conference on Volunteering and Service
- **When:** June 17 – 18, 2012
- **Where:** Chicago, Illinois
- **Registration and more information:**
www.volunteeringandservice.org

The next slide is to alert you to a learning opportunity called the "Community Blueprint Summit for Change." It's a preconference to the National Conference on Volunteering and Service which is scheduled June 17th and 18th, 2012. The main conference is June 18th through 20th. It's in Chicago, Illinois, and registration information as well as program information is at the volunteering and service website. The Community Blueprint Summit for Change is the opportunity for you to have an intense exposure to collaboration building project that's administered by Points of Light called the "Community Blueprint Network," and that tells you a little bit more of what that is.

So if you're coming to the NCVS already, consider adding Sunday to your itinerary, and otherwise there are some main sessions as well in the veteran and military track. I hope to meet some of you at the conference. I think you have this slide, Margie.

To Continue this Discussion...

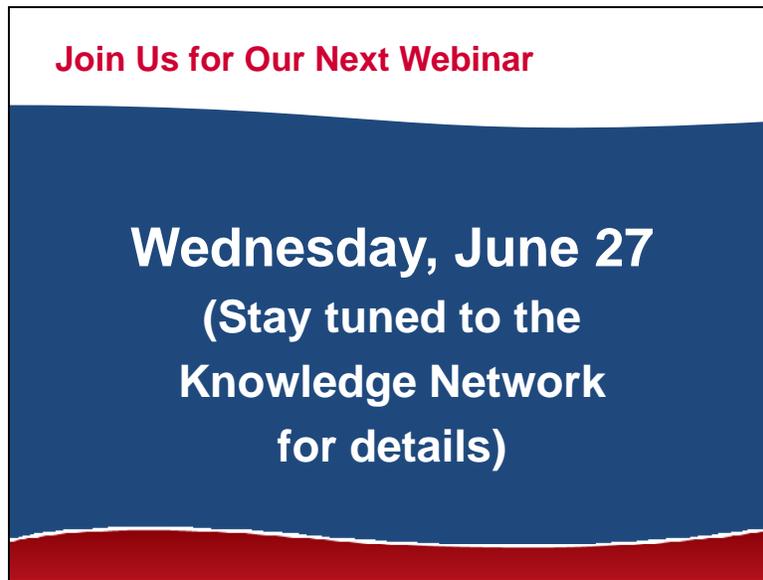
**Veterans and Military Families
Knowledge Network**
<http://bit.ly/VSOPartners>

[Margie] Thanks very much, Bob. And, as you can tell, there are many, many resources available to you and many of them are currently housed on the Veterans and Military Family Knowledge Network, which is run out of the National Service Resource Center. We do encourage you to visit this site. We have set up a special forum for discussion on this very topic and we welcome your questions and comments. Many of

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you have posed some very specific questions which will require me to do a little bit of research. When we finish with this webinar we'll take these questions and divide them up and get the answers, and we'll post those answers back on the Knowledge Network. And we hope that you'll please visit that network, you're welcome to join, because that's where you can find out what kinds of information is available and what tools are available, for example, for recruiting veterans, because we do have a toolkit up there. You'll also be able to have conversations with others who are engaged in this work. Okay?

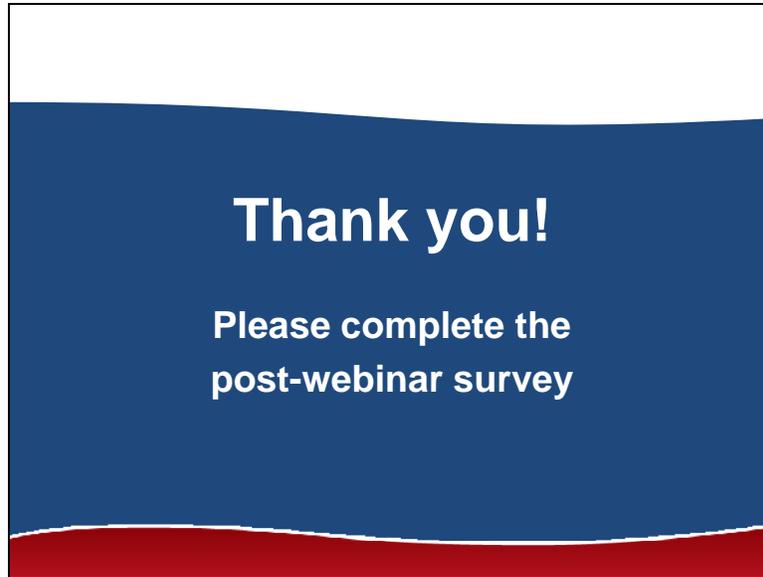
So thank you very much. This is the Knowledge Network. We invite you all to join and to pose your questions there as well as to do some information gathering.



We have another webinar coming up. As I said, we have these once a month.

Some of them are general information to help you in your work and others are going to be focused on particular programs or program models, and this one on Wednesday, the 7th, is going to be featuring our colleagues in Montana and some of their work with rural veterans.

So we encourage you to join that conversation and invite your friends. The more, the merrier. Any other comments from our presenters?



[Bob] No. I just want to emphasize, as Margie said, that the questions that you posted in chat we'll be happy to answer. I think that's a fabulous suggestion to put them in writing on the Knowledge Network and that way everyone can feel fully satisfied, just not what we can accomplish in the next couple of minutes.

So we're absolutely, all three of us, as well as Education Northwest, committed to your success and your future learning and learning from you, so thank you all. I'm so impressed with how many participants we've had today, and I think it's a very bright day for the military and veteran community to see this much energy and passion and desire to serve from those of you, so thank you.

[Margie] Thank you, Bob. Thank you for your wonderful presentation. And, Theresa, thank you too. We know that this is something that's very near and dear to both of your hearts.

[Theresa] Yes, I just echo those comments. Thank you all so much for joining us today and for all the work that you're doing within your communities. And if there's anything that we can do to help you, feel free to give us a call or send us an e-mail.

[Erich] And I think with that, we've reached the official end time of our webinar, so we want to let you get back to that good work that you're doing in your communities, so we'll let you go. When we post the recording of this session we'll also provide a copy of the slides although hopefully you also received a copy earlier this morning or yesterday, but if not, we'll make sure there's a copy available for you.

So, as was mentioned, we'll follow-up and get to some of those questions we weren't able to get to now. Please do complete the evaluation that will pop up when you exit out of WebEx.

And thank you for joining us today. And with that, we will officially end the webinar. Thank you, everyone.