



Kitsap County Veterans Program

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD 2025 WORK PLAN

Meeting Days, Time and Location: 2nd Wednesday of each month @ 1730; Location Olympic College Bldg. 4, Rm 129

Advisory Board Chair: Jayme DeGooyer; Jayme.DeGooyer@gmail.com;

Advisory Board Vice Chair: Mark Lowe; mark-d-low@wavecable.com

Advisory Board Staff: Rick Becker, rbecker@kitsap.gov, 360-337-4811

Advisory Board Purpose/Mission Statement: Advise the Board of County Commissioners on the needs of local indigent veterans, the resources available to help veterans, and programs that could benefit the needs of local indigent veterans and their families.

2025 Goal	Status % Complete	2025 Priority Level	Comments/Coordination
TIER 1: HIGH PRIORITY			
1. Investigate expanding Stand Down type services to other times during the year.	0%	High	Stand Downs occur twice each year in Bremerton. Investigate options that might offer similar services at other times of the year and in different places that are more convenient to those without reliable transportation. Report options to the VAB in July 2025. Carlos Trujillo.
2. Develop a women's group that meets regularly.	0%	High	The number of women veterans has steadily increased over the years with a corresponding increase in participation at veteran events. Experience at the Women's Circle at Stand Downs has shown there may be enough demand to offer more regular meeting opportunities for women veterans. Investigate options to rally women veterans in Kitsap County as part of their support system. Jayme DeGooyer.

2025 Goal	Status % Complete	2025 Priority Level	Comments/Coordination
2. Support two Stand Downs.	0%	High	Kitsap Veteran Stand Downs have proven to be a valuable service to the indigent and homeless veterans. Continue the strong partnership with KAVA to plan and execute two Stand Downs during 2025. Mark Lowe
3. Run to Tahoma XIV	0%	High	The Run to Tahoma is a deeply meaningful tribute to honor veterans in Kitsap County who have passed away without family or friends to claim them. Maintain the partnership with veteran service organizations to ensure a touching and impactful event on the Saturday before Memorial Day. Mark Lowe
4. Support Military Appreciation Day	0%	High	This well-loved event celebrates both active-duty service members and veterans, drawing significant community attention. Sponsor a table to share valuable information about the Kitsap County Veterans Program and veteran benefits. Veterans Program Coordinator
5. Support Veterans Day Event	0%	High	Dedicated to honoring veterans, this event offers a platform to connect with the community. Sponsor a table to provide insights into the Kitsap County Veterans Program and available veteran benefits. Veterans Program Coordinator
6. Hold a Community Service Provider gathering to discuss outreach and service to veterans. Kitsap County Veterans Service Provider "Muster."	0%	High	Develop and implement a plan to convene service providers and stakeholders for a collaborative discussion on creating a systematic approach to support veterans transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Focus on identifying key challenges, sharing resources, and establishing actionable steps to streamline services and improve outcomes for veterans in need. Matt Shillingburg and Mark Lowe.

2025 Goal	Status % Complete	2025 Priority Level	Comments/Coordination
7. Consider veterans resource center expansion.	0%	High	The Veteran Resource Center is becoming increasingly recognized and used by the local veteran community. Collaborate with the Olympic College administration to expand impactful services, creating a comprehensive in-person experience for veterans in Kitsap County. This expansion will enable veterans to address and resolve multiple needs efficiently and effectively in one central location. Tatiane Simons
8. Investigate funding / contracting accredited VSO services in Kitsap County.	0%	High	Requests for assistance with VA disability claims remain the most common reason veterans seek support. Ensuring veterans receive the benefits they have earned not only improves their quality of life but also positively impacts county revenue through increased local spending by veterans. Advocate for the establishment of a paid Veteran Service Officer (VSO) position to enhance the support already provided by local accredited service officers. Additionally, back Washington State legislative initiatives aimed at securing funded VSO positions in every county statewide, ensuring consistent and accessible assistance for all veterans. Matt Shillingburg
TIER 2: MODERATE PRIORITY			
1. VAF Debit Card to meet immediate needs.	0%	Moderate	Indigent and homeless veterans frequently seek assistance from the Veterans Program Coordinator and Veterans Assistance Fund Administrator to address urgent needs such as food, fuel, and clothing. To better support these veterans in a timely manner, consider implementing a program to provide preloaded debit cards, with a maximum limit of \$100, for immediate relief. Develop a robust security plan to ensure proper oversight and minimize the risk of fraud and misuse. Veterans Program Coordinator

2025 Goal	Status % Complete	2025 Priority Level	Comments/Coordination
2. Increase outreach activities to both active duty and veterans.	0%	Moderate	Ensuring veterans and transitioning active-duty service members are fully informed about the wide range of benefits available to them can significantly enhance their lives and overall well-being. Beyond supporting key events such as Stand Downs, the Run to Tahoma, Military Appreciation Day, and Veterans Day, explore additional opportunities to address the needs of both active-duty personnel and veterans. Potential strategies include expanding social media outreach, participating in more civic events, and fostering deeper collaboration with local veteran service organizations. These efforts can strengthen connections and provide even greater support to those who have served. Mark Lowe
TIER 3: LOW PRIORITY			
1. Garden – Improve veteran participation in the garden care. Deliver harvested vegetables to the Fall Stand Down.	Ongoing	Low	Look at moving the garden activities to Retsil veterans home to help with garden care. Jason Reis
2. Continue perusing more veterans benefit administration presence in Kitsap County.	Ongoing	Low	The Veterans Administration once provided local in-person assistance to Kitsap County veterans. Low visitor counts to the office forced the VA to reconsider how they will deliver services to local veterans. The use of “pop up” events is used to address unmet needs in the rural areas of Washington State. Maintain contact with VA staff to assure the VAB is informed about VA sponsored in-person events to better serve local veterans. Mark Lowe.
3. Consider a change to the VAB by-laws.	Ongoing	Low	The VAB by-laws does not address member residency requirements. Consider inserting a requirement that a VAB members must be a Kitsap County resident. Jayme DeGooyer / VAB members.

GOALS COMPLETED OR DELETED			
Goal	Status	Year	Comments
New Veteran's memorial in Administration Building	Completed	2021	New memorial wall panel was installed that recognizes all those who have been honored as part of the Run to Tahoma.
Conducted The Unforgotten, Run to Tahoma	Completed	2021	Despite COVID restrictions the Run to Tahoma was successfully held.
Updated Policy & Procedures Manual	Completed	2021	Policy and Procedure manual was updated and ultimately approved in March 2022.
Conducted The Unforgotten Run to Tahoma	Completed	2022	In-person event. 200 attended.
Conducted Spring Grab and Go in place of a Stand Down due to Covid restrictions.	Completed	2022	Covid event. About 125 attended.
Conducted Spring Stand Down	Completed	2022	Traditional Stand Down with over 100 attending. (37 registered veterans.)
Update the County Veterans Website	Completed	2022	New formatting. Updated links and content throughout.
World Suicide Prevention Event	Completed	2022	Rick Raymond from the VAB spearheaded event. Will move to Mental Health organization in 2023. VAB will lend support.
Process VAF Assistance Applications	Completed	2022	225 unduplicated applicants served.
VAB increase social media presence in 2022 to reach more veterans.	Completed	2022	Facebook more widely used to announce events. Name changed to "Friends of the Veterans Advisory Board."
VAB Women Resources. Maintain Women Veteran resource line. Hold Woman's circles Stand Downs.	Completed	2022	Dedicated phone line maintained. Woman's circle held at the Fall Stand Down. Women's services were delivered at Abraham House during the Grab and Go.
Maintain Drug/Alcohol transition housing benefit administered by KCR	Completed	2022	Service will be funded through Emergency Direct Services as the money allocated for this purpose has been reprogrammed due to lack of demand.
Reviewed Policy and Procedures Manual	Completed	2022	No changes needed.
Organize two Stand Downs in cooperation with Kitsap Area Veterans Alliance (KAVA)	Completed	2023	Supported two stand down events with 128 registered veterans. Several VAB members participated in planning and one raised donations.
Process applications for temporary emergency assistance	Completed	2023	KCR processed several hundred applications for services in 2023. Delivered over \$230K in services to indigent and homeless veterans.

Goal	Status	Year	Comments
Organize the Unforgotten, Run to Tahoma, Ceremony which receives the remains of unclaimed veterans from the County Coroner and delivers them to the Tahoma Veterans Cemetery for internment. Update protocol.	Completed	2023	Three veterans were honored in 2023 during a ceremony at the Administration Building. The honored veterans were escorted by over two hundred participants to Tahoma National Cemetery.
Update and revise Veteran Assistance Policy and Procedure Manual	Completed	2023	Information was received from KCR to help update policy and procedure documents to improve decision making and application processing.
Provide and monitor NWJP legal contract providing civil legal services	Completed	2023	Over \$50K in legal services were delivered to veterans and their family members.
Maintain outreach program for Veterans incarcerated in the Kitsap County Jail	Completed	2023	KCR representative visited the jail as requested by the Sheriff's department to provide information and services to eligible inmates and in some cases, to their family members.
Maintain VAB Committee for Women Veteran Issues to keep VAB updated and informed	Completed	2023	The VAB Chair kept the VAB members informed of initiatives and activities at each VAB meeting.
VAB Women Resources. Maintain Women Veteran resource line. Hold two Woman's circles per year at the April and September Stand Downs.	Completed	2023	VAB members provided services to women at each of the Stand Downs. Comfort items were inventoried and replenished after each Stand Down. New efforts to promote the services were completed. Fliers were updated.
Update to County Veterans Website	Completed	2023	Web site updated as required to keep information current.
Increase outreach activities to both active duty and veterans.	Completed	2024	Participated in Veterans Day, Military Appreciation Day, County Fair, Silverdale Whaling Days, and other community events through the year. Staffed information tables at events and provided Veterans Assistance Program maximum exposure to not only veterans in need but to community members who may know of veterans in need.

Goal	Status	Year	Comments
Establish a concept, scope of operations and estimated annual operating cost for a Kitsap County Veterans Center.	Completed	2024	The long-term goal is to establish a veteran service center in the county where veterans can come and obtain information, claims assistance, resources, and attend events. Opened on a trial basis a Veteran Resource Center at Olympic College that is staffed two days per week.
Support two Stand Downs with KAVA.	Completed	2024	Planned and executed two Stand Downs with the Kitsap Area Veterans Alliance hosting over 200 registered veterans.
Plan and execute the Run to Tahoma XIII.	Completed	2024	The VAB Chair and Vice Chair led activities with key VAB members to plan the ceremony and collaborate with local veteran motorcycle groups to escort honored veterans to Tahoma National Cemetery. Over 200 veterans participated in the event.
Veteran Garden	Completed	2024	VAB members expanded garden operations in 2024 by locating to a significantly larger plot. The harvest was shared with local food banks.
VAB involved with Kitsap County Mental Health & Suicide Prevention committee established by County – have one VAB board member as representative. Participate in annual Mental Health/Suicide Prevent Event	Completed	2024	Rick Raymond represented the VAB at committee meetings and advise the VAB on needed assistance. The VAB hosted a table at a Suicide Awareness Event on 14 September

Goal	Status	Year	Comments
TIER 2: MODERATE PRIORITY			
VAB increase social media presence to reach more veterans.	Completed	2024	Social media lead with VAB members posted applicable information more frequently with relevant information about local activities.
Maintain presence at Veteran's Day and Military Appreciation Day events.	Completed	2024	VAB members supported the Veterans Day table at the Kitsap Pavilion.
Increase Outreach for Veteran Garden including social media and newspapers	Completed	2024	New flyers were developed and distributed to the community at events and through social media.
Continue Veteran Program web site improvements.	Completed	2024	The VAB Coordinator in collaboration with the Human Services Department Office Manager maintained the site with current information for the public.

Revision Date – 11/25/2024