

March 1, 2024

Greetings,

We hope you enjoy this week's National Council Weekly Update on the pertinent happenings of your VFW departments.

### **Development**

As February comes to an end, we're thrilled with the outcome. Fundraising revenue went from \$3.2M last week to \$4.2M this week. The bulk of this success continues to come from the generosity of VFW's non-member donors. However, it's essential to address a concerning trend regarding VFW's member donors. Out of the total membership, there are only 78K VFW members that are active donors. These member donations make up a large part of the Department grants and fall outside of Innovairre's contractual guarantee. We urge each of you to engage with your fellow members and emphasize the impact of their contributions and educate them on how their donations directly benefit their Department and local communities.

This week's Development Campaigns are listed below:

- March 1 Appeal:
  - o Planned Giving mailing #3 (part 1) – survey to VFW members.
- March 2 Appeal:
  - o Partners in Patriotism invite #3 to member and nonmember donors.

Contact: VFW Development Director Kelly Jones, [KellyJones@vfw.org](mailto:KellyJones@vfw.org).

### **Programs**

- VFW National Convention 2nd Annual Cornhole Tournament:

We are kicking off the call for Cornhole teams!

Join us for this instant VFW classic experience presented by veteran-owned KC Crew, the largest adult sports league in Kansas City. All proceeds from the event will go toward VFW PACT Act benefits assistance. The PACT Act expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances.

The 2nd Annual VFW Cornhole Tournament Series will consist of two tournaments over two days! Each tournament will have a different theme to help include each military faction

as well as the general public. The event is all in good FUN to raise awareness and funds for VFW PACT Act benefits assistance and to support our veterans.

This is a celebration of our veterans, the people who fought for our country with the selfless spirit that defines our communities. It is a two-day event where we set aside ego and come together to raise awareness and funding for our VFW Accredited Service Officers.

VFW Cornhole information, registration and details can be found [here](#).

Contact: VFW Programs Director Lynn W. Rolf, III, [LRolf@vfw.org](mailto:LRolf@vfw.org).

## **Human Resources**

- New Hire:
  - Nancy Springer is a new Associate Director in the National Legislative Service Department in the D.C. Office.
- Positions Actively Recruiting For:
  - Shipping Receiving Clerk (PT and FT) – K.C. Office.
  - Assistant Director Compensation and Pension Policy – D.C. Office.

Contact: VFW Human Resources Director Sari Maple, [SMaple@vfw.org](mailto:SMaple@vfw.org).

## **Administrative Operations**

- There are currently 54 Posts under suspension, five of which are new, three lifted suspensions, and one new and pending charter surrender. There is one processed Post consolidation pursuant to Section 209 of the National Bylaws, and one new Post charter application approved. The organization has 5,654 chartered Posts.
- Administrative Operations is engaged in 19 Article IX Disciplinary Actions, 16 Administrative Removals/Actions and 14 membership eligibility challenges.
- Currently Administrative Operations has 84 Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions in for review, 45 of which are new; current turnaround time on Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation submissions is approximately 45-60 days.

## **Disciplinary Action Guide:**

There have been recent updates to the Disciplinary Action Guide that outlines the process to successfully complete a disciplinary action. We have included information to the guide that encompasses sentencing guidelines which is located as an appendix at the end of the guide and outlines sentencing/penalty considerations, clarifications, and examples.

The guide is available on the Document Repository in the “Guide to Disciplinary Action” folder or on the VFW website behind the login under My VFW/Bylaws: Training, Forms & Templates/ Training/Training Guides & Standard Operating Procedures.

### **Department Inspections:**

As the Department Inspection initiative is well underway for the 2023-2024 term, we would like to share some of the common items that have been identified by the inspection team during their visits. We are halfway through the scheduled inspections for the year so the items below may change as we are able to gather more data. Please understand the list of items below is not all-encompassing but are the most commonly identified concerns the team encounters during the inspections. Some of these items are considered deficiencies pursuant to the National Bylaws but some are simply issues that can assist a Department in their daily operations, if implemented.

### **Most Commonly Identified Concerns:**

- Failure to have proof of eligibility for all District Commanders, Senior Vice Commanders, and Junior Vice Commanders on file at the Department (Ref. Section 416).
- Departments are not properly bonded pursuant to Section 703 of the National Bylaws.
  - Failing to ensure **all** officers accountable for funds are bonded.
  - Departments not securing a bond that covers the required amount of all funds.
  - Departments do not have VFW National listed as additional insureds.
- Lack of or incomplete and outdated Standard Operating Procedures (HQ’s staff, Service Officers, and HQ’s operations).
- Lack of defined Adjutant/Quartermaster duties specific to the Department.
  - Lack of Employee Handbook.
- To include policies approved by the Department Council of Administration and signed by all employees and Department officers.
  - Conflict of Interest
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Travel Policy
  - Vehicle Use Policy
  - Use of Credit Cards
  - Code of Ethics
  - Information Technology/Security

- The Department Council of Administration should be approving Budgets, SOPs, Policies, Employee Handbooks, etc., but are failing to maintain proper records or meeting minutes showing approval of these items.

We look forward to another successful year of inspections and if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Quentin Carroll at [QCarroll@vfw.org](mailto:QCarroll@vfw.org).

Contact: VFW Administrative Operations Director Quentin Carroll, [QCarroll@vfw.org](mailto:QCarroll@vfw.org).

## **Membership**

- Be safe as you travel to Washington, D.C., for this year's Washington Conference! Take many notes and have many conversations to take back to your Districts. Pro-Tip: Create a bulletized list of the legislative priorities for your local areas to use for recruiting. Ensure your Districts are well versed in where they can obtain membership/recruiting training and resources. Find them all at, [vfw.org](http://vfw.org) >Membership Recruiting and Retention. For questions refer recruiters to the National Membership department, [Membership@vfw.org](mailto:Membership@vfw.org).
- This year's annual recruiting is up! We are 10K new members ahead of this time last year. However, we are behind 10K continuous members from this time last year. We place an importance on recruiting new members – **ensure you are making an effort to keep the members you have**. Consider hosting a Post Open House to boost community awareness engaging members and potential new members alike.
- Yes, it is true. National Membership can reimburse Departments for membership event costs/fees. A request from the Department Quartermaster with event info/cost(s) is needed for approval. The request should provide the type of event, how many veterans are expected to attend and to what extent the Department requesting funds is willing to cover event costs. Event(s) must be approved by the National membership department prior to the event taking place. Encourage Post leaders to start planning their springtime recruiting events now. Mitigate challenges early to ensure success! Order up-to-date recruiting materials on [vfw.org](http://vfw.org). Don't forget we have some swag for your events as well.
- Need recruiting training/resources?! If you have a topic for training, we would love to hear from you! Contact us by emailing, [Membership@vfw.org](mailto:Membership@vfw.org). Follow our Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/VFWmembership>.

Contact: VFW Membership Interim Director Corey Hunt, [CoreyHunt@vfw.org](mailto:CoreyHunt@vfw.org).

## **Meetings and Events**

- Continuing to process Louisville exhibitor applications through eShow platform. Sending out the eShow link to new exhibitor requests.
- Leaving for D.C. Washington Conference Feb. 29, and will return to office on March 11.

- Feb. 27 - ZOOM meeting with Louisville housing manager to review details of Louisville housing prior to housing opening next month. Note: Louisville uses Meeting Max as the housing program.
- Reminder: **Housing opens March 18, 2024.**
- Preparing initial draft of 2024-25 budget.
- Ongoing, working with legal on upcoming meeting contracts and addendums.

Contact: VFW Meetings and Events/Exhibits Director Vanessa Kane, CMP, CMM,  
[VKane@vfw.org](mailto:VKane@vfw.org).

### **VFW Foundation**

- The VFW Foundation corporate development team secured \$32,500 in sponsorship for the Washington Conference which includes gifts from T-Mobile, Oracle Health, Booz Allen and Health Psychology Associates.
- Lisa Baronio has resigned as Executive Director of the VFW Foundation. Assistant Adjutant General Brian Walker will become the interim VFW Foundation Executive Director.
- Burger King has agreed to shift support of Unmet Needs to National Veterans Service. At a meeting with Chairman of the Board VFW Foundation Mike DeRosa, and former Executive Director Lisa Baronio, Burger King President Tom Curtis understood how leveraging support from Unmet Needs could assist many more veterans with expansive support.

Contact: VFW Foundation Director of Donor Relations Richard Freiburghouse, [RFreiburghouse@vfw.org](mailto:RFreiburghouse@vfw.org).

### **National Legislative Service**

- Independent Budget Released: Leading veterans service organizations — Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — have released *The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2025-2026*. This report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future. “While this year’s Independent Budget is once again complete, it is now imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other stakeholders, to make the needs and interests of all veterans a top priority,” said VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci. “We have co-authored this report and offered budgetary recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care and earned benefits for the men and women who served.” [Read the report](#).
- VA Direct Deposit Consolidation: Starting April 20, 2024, VA will no longer send benefit payments for veterans or family members to more than one bank account. This is due to an IT modernization effort by VA for its GI Bill payment system. This change will impact approximately 50,000 students who receive the GI Bill and other VA benefits in separate direct deposit accounts. VA is sending weekly emails and text messages to this group of veterans and beneficiaries informing them of the upcoming change and asking them to

select one bank account going forward. If students do not consolidate their bank accounts by April 20, VA will continue to send payments but will designate the non-education benefit payment account as the primary bank account. [Read more](#) for details on how to choose a single bank account for direct deposit.

- VFW Washington Conference App Now Available: In anticipation of the Washington Conference being held next week, the VFW has provided a mobile app to give event attendees the tools needed to make the most of their visit to our nation's capital. The app is available for download at both the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#). View our [VFW Events App Quick Start Guide](#) for downloading assistance.

Contact: VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray, [PMurray@vfw.org](mailto:PMurray@vfw.org).

### **National Veterans Service**

- NVS director and Tony Lowe from the VFW Foundation, facilitated a roundtable discussion about the Electronic Health Record rollout at the Lovell Federal Health Care Center along with VFW Post 4600 In Chicago, Illinois.
- NVS director met with representatives from Express Scripts to discuss a potential NVS donation.
- NVS director testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on the VA National Cemetery Administration.
- VFW's NVS Pre-Discharge representatives briefed transitioning service members on VA benefits at Forts Bliss, Cavazos, Campbell, Drum, Riley, Meade, Myer, and NSA San Diego and the Air Force Academy.
- NVS health team participated in the VA Caregiver Support briefing to VSOs.
- NVS health team collaborated with VA for the biweekly Atlas program.

Contact: VFW National Veterans Service Director Michael Figlioli, [MFiglioli@vfw.org](mailto:MFiglioli@vfw.org).

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