

Minnesota Commanders' Task Force Guidelines

History

The Minnesota Commanders' Task Force (CTF) was created in 1988 and is comprised of elected leaders, adjutants and legislative staff from the nine largest congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organizations in Minnesota.

Purpose

1. Develop a unified Minnesota Veterans Legislative Agenda document for State and Federal Legislators and represent / act as a single voice at the Capitol, ensure taskforce members embrace and communicate the legislative agenda, by actively promoting and participating in legislative hearings, and leveraging the combine membership numbers of Veterans' Service Organizations in Minnesota.
2. To act as an advisory board to the Minnesota Commissioner of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), state of current Veterans issues, County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) Legislative Activities, Veterans Programs (i.e. input to Veteran for Veterans (V4V), Veterans outreach, assist the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA) priorities and actions. Assist with communications to the greater Veterans Community, Partner with Commissioner / MDVA when called upon or as necessary.
3. Work as a unified Veterans' leadership team when establishing Veterans programs to form partnerships in the rollout and execution of new programs when possible.

Officers and their Duties

1. **Voting Members** – State Department Commanders, Commandants or Presidents from the following organizations: American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veteran of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America. If a member organization shows a disinterest in participating in the Commanders Task Force, they may at any time decide to not be involved. Conversely, if a congressionally chartered Veteran Service Organization asks to join, the assembled members may address possible steps for inclusion.
2. **Ex-officio** – Adjutants and Legislative staff of above organizations, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, Veteran service organization representative, or designees in their absence. The immediate former CTF chairperson may serve in an advisory role for CTF in the following year if desired by CTF.
3. **Task Force Chair/Vice Chair** – Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Commanders/Commandant/President. Duties include presiding over meetings, keep communication open between members, establish the meeting's agenda and setting up meeting location. Roberts Rule of Order will be used when considering legislative initiatives **only when deemed necessary**.

*This document is not intended to restrict any subsequent MN Commanders' Task Force from making changes as they see fit; the goal is to increase efficiency.

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Agenda/Minutes/Website

It is the chairs responsibility to develop the monthly meeting agenda. MDVA staff may assist the Chair with creating meeting agendas and distributing to all members before the meeting. MDVA may advise Chair and members as needed. CTF members and MDVA may request or suggest meeting topics and speakers.

MDVA's participation with the Commanders Task Force is in an advisory and support role. Historically, MDVA has disseminated the meeting agenda and materials, taken notes for meeting minutes and maintained the CTF website which they may continue to do at their discretion. They may at any point choose to adjust their participation as they see fit. It is the responsibility of the CTF to identify areas requiring coverage upon being notified of any change in the MDVA's participation.

Unanimous Vote/Quorum Vote

Only members or their designees are allowed to vote (one vote per member organization). A unanimous vote is required for all initiatives or statements that represent the Minnesota Commanders' Task Force as a whole. A majority (quorum) vote will be used in all simple internal matters not to be represented to the public. A quorum will consist of 5 voting members of whom one shall be the Chair or Vice Chair. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are unable to attend a meeting, they may designate an acting chair for that meeting.

Annual Leadership Training & Initial Meeting

1. Each fall, MDVA organizes a leadership conference for the incoming members of the CTF. In the past, this has been a two day event and has been held at Camp Ripley; housing reservations and meals provided.
2. MDVA will provide an overview of the agency which includes the State Veterans Homes, Commissioner Duties, Programs & Services and other initiatives. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Offices and Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers shall be invited to send representatives for periodic updates. Outside speakers are also invited as appropriate.
3. This conference typically includes the first fall meeting of a new CTF. Voting members shall elect that years Chair and Vice Chair. Self-nomination is allowed. In case more than one person is interested in becoming chair or vice-chair, it is helpful for each person nominated to speak on their visions or experience with legislative matters before a vote is taken.

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Meetings

1. Meetings are typically held once a month following the initial training session. The dates, location and time determined by voting members with the help of MDVA by the October meeting normally lasting two hours and may be in person or telephone conference; decided by the Chair. They will be kept on subject by Chair. Special meetings may be called by the consent of a simple majority.
2. These are an opportunity to discuss the agenda, progress, strategy and updates on legislative issues.
3. They can also serve as an opportunity for outside entities to present or seek guidance from the members of the CTF.
4. It is very important to have each member's organization present at each meeting. Consistency of attendance can be the difference between success and failure of legislation.

Legislative Initiatives

1. Historically the primary goal of the CTF has been to develop, advocate for and see enacted legislative initiatives to improve the lives of all Minnesota Veterans or their spouses.
2. Legislative initiatives are developed by the member organizations, with the assistance of MDVA. Approval and prioritization of initiatives must be presented and approved by unanimous vote of voting members, usually no later than the **December meeting**. This deadline is intended to allow each organization to hold town hall meetings and speak with legislators throughout state.
3. Each member organization is responsible to communicate all legislative initiatives to all of their members and organize town hall meetings where possible.

Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill

1. Date, time and location of the annual Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill should be determined **by November** of each year. Planning should include the initiation of securing meeting room reservations for meetings with legislators, time of rally and location (Rotunda at the Capitol is recommended). The date and location for the Minnesota Veterans Day on the Hill is set by CTF (Veteran Service Organizations) or their designees, The United Veterans Legislative Committee (UVLC) and the Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers (MACVSO). MDVA assists with the planning and execution of the event.
2. Each member organization is responsible to inform all members of their organization of above information and work on details to help bring members to Veterans on the Hill.

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The following members of the 2018 Minnesota Commanders' Task Force have drawn up and approved these guidelines with the help of none voting members of the CTF. Approved electronically by all Voting members. 4/25/2018

2018 Chair Robert Saddoris

2018 Vice-Chair Rick Bugbee

American Legion Commander: Mike Schaffer

AMVETS Commander: Russ Kunkel

Disabled American Veterans Commander: Robert Saddoris

Jewish War Veterans Commander: Peter Nickitas

Marine Corps League Commandant: Jerry Wolters

Military Order of the Purple Heart Commander: Willy Pargo

Paralyzed Veterans of America President: Ken Klein

Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander: Rick Bugbee

Vietnam Veterans of America President: Terry Palmer

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