



SARATOGA COUNTY
VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY
152 West High St., Ballston Spa, NY 12020

SC-VSA

April 6th, 2013

Executive Summary, Saratoga County, Veterans' Service Agency (VSA)

Subject: Events and Activities Summary for April 1st through April 6th, 2013.

Executive Summary Intent: The purpose of this document is to provide situational awareness and understanding to subordinate and adjacent leaders and staff of the Veterans' Service Agency (VSA). This document does not by itself dictate official policy or decision.

Draft Mission: To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans.

Draft Vision: We will accomplish this by providing quality service, advocacy and counseling for the Veterans of Saratoga County Veteran and their families. In coordination with, other Saratoga county departments, non-government organizations, community based partners and affiliates will make sure our Veterans receive the right services, external assistance and benefits through outreach. The most essential portion of our charter is to ensure that our Veterans, especially those we come in contact with, are treated professionally with dignity and respect.

Summary:

1. Veteran Service Office Training. I shadowed Paul E. Stote, LTC (Ret), State Veteran's Counselor. His office is located on the campus of SUNY, Empire State College. Paul shared several methods and tools that assist him building a claim for his Veteran that will assist our team to improve our performance.
2. Proposed Name Change. We are proposing to change the name of the office from "Veterans Service Agency to the Department of Veterans Service. This will assist us in sending the message that our team does more than file a claim.
3. Peer to Peer.
 - a. On April 3rd, 2013, Amy Hughes met with Ryan Moore, Saratoga County Administrators Office, in order to encourage Amy to develop an article for the *Legislative Gazette*, a New York political newspaper that features state government news. Amy's first draft will be completed on April 18th, 2013 with the final draft to be completed on April 26th, 2013.
 - b. On April 3rd, 2013, Amy Hughes met with Brian O'Connor, and Julie Bosley, Saratoga County Auditors Office in order to discuss the "Peer to Peer spending guidelines" development. The Peer to Peer program has been at a standstill due the program not having the proper guidelines in place. A draft of the guidelines is completed and will be reviewed in the days to come.
 - c. On April 4th, 2013, we met with Mrs. Dianna Rios, Specialist, Services to the Armed Forces, American Red Cross (ARC) of Northeastern New York. We established a partnership where the ARC will support our peer to peer program by assisting us with recruiting for mentors from within ARC.

d. On April 5th, 2013, we met with Mr. Lou Cook , American Legion Commander. Although letters have been sent out to members of county government and clergy, the program has only been able to connect to pairs of Veterans. We still need to visit the local American Legion (AL), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and other affiliated groups to recruit mentors. Lou advised me during our first meeting that the program was mentioned at the county level but still needs to be deliberately promoted at the “Post” Level.

e. On Saturday, April 6th, 2013, we attended a peer to peer training event hosted by the Department of Veterans Affairs. During this event we were able to establish a partnership of programs and opened the possibility of sharing training resources. We discussed several ideas to reach out to and invite Veterans to join our programs. One idea that is feasible is to hold a mixer at Buffalo Wild Wings TM during a popular sporting event.

f. On April 12th, 2013, Amy will conduct her first “Peer to Peer Training Session.” This will be a pilot course and previous attendees will join the course as a validators. The previous course was developed and executed by Andrew Davis, the previous director, with most of the concepts and materials needing to be refined or redeveloped.

4. Veterans Committee Meeting. We attended the monthly meeting and shared the highlights of our first executive summary. This document will be the foundation of what this department presents and shares to partners and affiliates. It should enable us to serve our county and veterans in an effective and predictable manner.

5. Saratoga County Economic Development Committee Meeting. We attended this meeting in order to offer insight to the discussion regarding our County’s Veterans’ employment needs. The committee agreed to partner with the Veterans Committee to form a cross functional sub-committee to analyze the current status of our Veterans and develop a plan to address the needs that we find. The first “Veterans Employment Needs” Working Group meeting comprised of this “Task Force” will be on April 10th, 2013 at 3:30 PM.

6. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). KEE To Independent Growth, INC requested to have Saratoga County support their request for a grant to allow them to conduct several projects in our county. We sat with Tina Potter our Commissioner of Social Services to evaluate the merits of this program. We came to the initial agreement that the grant will serve as “seed” money to start services that will eventually become “expected services” after the grant money runs out. Before moving forward we will set up a meeting with Mr. Peter Lacy in order to gain more background information. (See enclosed letter, dated: March 27th, 2013)

7. Veterans Outreach.

a. The Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency Team met with the Superintendent of Flexible Services and the Mobility Manager of CDTA in order to familiarize ourselves with the policy of CDTA and its availability to our Counties Veterans.

1) Referral Process between CDTA and the Saratoga County Veterans Service Agency.

a) CDTA and Saratoga County have established a referral process to ease the transition from one service to another for our Veterans.

b) The Saratoga County Veterans service agency will assist the Veteran in completing the application and forwarding it to CDTA for processing.

2) Josie established a relationship with CDTA (Maryellen) and this partnership will ease the transition of services for our Veterans with disabilities. We will meet with Capital Land Taxi to see if they will consider a reduced fare for Veterans, utilizing their accessible vehicles, who have the Saratoga County Return the F.A.V.O.R. Card.

b. February Honor Deceased Veterans Follow Up. The team was contacted by Joseph Mulvaney Jr. who is the son of our February Honoree. He was very upset that all the awards and medals were presented to his brother, Michael, and he did not receive anything. Josie and Frank both interacted with Mr. Mulvaney over the phone and in person. An apology was offered and it was explained to Mr. Mulvaney that one of his family members had instructed Frank at the ceremony that his brother would receive all awards. Supervisor Lewza was present when that conversation took place. Frank later confirmed with the Supervisor that an acceptable solution would be to forward Joseph a second flag as a courtesy. Mr. Mulvaney was extremely grateful.

8. Veterans Service Officer Actions.

- a. Frank processed 8 new claims at an average of 1.75 hours per claim.
- b. Frank conducted 19 open claims follow up engagements at an average of 1.26 hours per engagement.
- c. The team scheduled 10 claim appointments at average of 1.10 hours per scheduling.
- d. The team served 16 walk-in clients at an average of 18.75 minutes per visit.
- e. The team processed 85 phone call inquiries at an average of 4.58 minutes per inquiry.
- f. The team received 11 referrals from within from County DSS resulting in 4 scheduled appointments for next week.

9. Upcoming Events:

April 8th, 2013.

- VSO Training
- Meet Donna Pannel, CEO Destiny Productions in order to discuss Saratoga County Veterans' Services Infomercial.

April 9th, 2013 – Meet a Budd Mazurek, CEO Saratoga RPC, at the at the Guardian.

April 10th, 2013.

- Meet Amy Amoroso, Veterans Business Advisor, Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Small Business Development Center
- The first "Veterans Employment Needs" Working Group meeting.

April 11th, 2013 – Veterans' Service Officer introduction and training on new contact management system

April 12th, 2013. "Peer to Peer" training session at SUNY Empire State College.

10. Conclusion: I will prepare my initial counseling of our team members on April 20th, 2013.

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