Playbook: Establishing a CVEB
Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) Model

Last Updated: May 2023

- Inclusive
- Accessible
- Community Driven
- Flexible
- Integrated
CVEB Framework

- Delivers an overall structure for how boards operate and succeed.

**INCLUSIVE**
- Inclusive of all local Veteran focused resources and open to Veterans, service members, stakeholders, resources, advocates, and existing community efforts and engagements
- Establish a collaborative network within the community and provide the opportunity for education and networking with a holistic approach

**ACCESSIBLE**
- Public forums are held regularly throughout the year
- Forums are held in geographically diverse public venues to encourage broader participation
- Forums are actively promoted to involve the public on local Veteran issues

**FLEXIBLE**
- Charters define term appointments for board members to allow for flexibility
- Community demographics inform geographic boundaries
- Customized to reflect the unique characteristics of the community

**COMMUNITY DRIVEN**
- Led by Community Veterans Engagement Boards that shape the broader community efforts
- Chaired by two respected community leaders and includes identified local stakeholders
- Local VA leaders serve on the board but do not form a majority of the board’s membership

**INTEGRATED**
- Promotes and leverages local capabilities and resources for Veterans
- Local and District VA leaders network across communities to share best practices
- Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) leaders participate and actively engage in meetings and public forums

**Why are CVEBs Important?**

CVEBs provide a forum for local collaboration among public and private resources, services, and advocates. United around common goals, objectives, and actions, these communities will...

- Improve Veterans and service member outcomes by connecting public and private resources and capabilities.
- Create forums where public and private efforts can learn about each other and work together to enhance their effectiveness and improve Veteran and service member outcomes.
- Enable Veterans and service members to easily identify and reach all available resources, voice their opinions, and provide valuable input.
- Create direct lines of communication within the community to serve as an early warning system and enable local responsiveness to issues.
Establishing a Board

- Boards locally operated but share a common mission. The process (below) guides the establishment of a board, with opportunity for local members to add customizations in each step.

**Standup Board**

1. Co-Chairs
   - Respected leaders in the local Veteran community willing and capable of leading a board of local representatives and VA leaders

2. Board Members
   - Existing community Veterans group’s representatives and local VA leaders

3. Charter
   - Working document that outlines CVEB goals and structure

**Build MyVA Community**

4. Promotion
   - Inform and promote the board to the public and encourage collaboration and participation in community forums

5. Public Forums
   - Public forums are all inclusive: Veterans, service members, Veteran supporters, and the general public

**Ongoing Operations**

6. Collaboration
   - Ideas, information, knowledge, and issues are shared among community stakeholders

7. Action
   - Test and measure solutions, escalate issues as needed, and share results

"Satellite board concept"

Existing groups open to collaboration may create a “satellite” board that would be co-Chaired by a member of the existing group and an individual not associated in the existing group.

**Board Name:**

The co-chairs and board members determine the board’s name and should reflect the board’s geographic service area

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Co-Chairs

- Each board has local external community co-chairs who serve as founding leaders. These leaders are responsible for developing the community movement, framing the issues that the community will address, and leading efforts to empower local solutions. Co-Chairs are not VA employees and are preferably not political appointees or elected officials, as these are grassroots efforts.

Primary Responsibilities:
- Lead board meetings and community forums on a recurring basis
- Evaluate outcomes
- Coordinate and facilitate public forums
- Encouragement and Empathy
- Bring thought and moral leadership
- Select founding members

Qualifications
- Veteran or Veteran advocate
- Demonstrated leader(s)
- Solution oriented
- Knowledgeable about local Veteran community

Board Membership

- Board membership selection and makeup is up to each CVEB and should reflect community interests and priorities.

Toolkit Items:
- Operating framework and suggested co-chair and board roles and responsibilities
- Sample project plan

Inclusive Accessible Community Driven Flexible Integrated

List of Potential Members:
- VBA Regional Office Director
- VA Medical Center Director
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Hospitals and Medical Treatment Facilities
- Financial Advising
- Job Training Services
- Mental Health Organizations
- State DVA Office
- Social Work Organizations
- Student Veteran Organizations
- Non-Profits and Foundations
- Colleges and Universities
- Housing Advocate groups
- Military Service Organizations (MSO)
- Employment Service Providers
- State, Local, Federal Government
- Faith Community
- Local National Guard or Military Base
- Veterans Treatment Courts
- Homelessness Services
- Tribal Government
- Banks or Loan Providers
- Veteran Service Organizations
- Local National Cemetery Director
- Department of Labor
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Charter

- The sample charter includes how the community will be structured and how it will meet the needs of the local Veteran community. The co-chairs and board members are responsible for drafting and finalizing a charter.

Promotion

- Co-chairs and board members will determine how to engage with the Veteran stakeholder community to actively promote the board through a variety of channels. The VA seal and flag may not be used by external organizations, individuals, or community groups to promote the use of the CVEB model; however, the “MyVA” logo may be used by the co-chairs and board members in the promotion of the community effort in sharing that the CVEB model framework is being used.

Board Meetings

- The Community Veteran Engagement Board meetings bring together members to conduct local CVEB business. These meetings are not intended to be open to the general public or the press to ensure that conversations are candid, and members can focus on finding practical solutions.

Toolkit Items:
- Sample Charter

- Toolkit Items
  - One page overview of CVEB (promotional)
  - FAQ
  - Sample press release

Tools to Connect:
- Social media
- VSO member emails
- Flyers in public places
- Road shows
- Announcements to local events or meetings
- Community list-serves

Components of a successful meeting:
- Agenda and specific topics
- Experts available to discuss specific topics
- Coordinators to take meeting minutes and action items
- Document meeting outcomes to share with the public
- Develop common agenda for action
Public Forums

- Public forums are an important tool to bring together the community, connect Veterans and their supporters with resources, and allow stakeholders to ask questions or raise concerns.

Key elements of the forum might include:

- Informational Presentations
- Service Kiosks
- Networking & Sharing

Framework Checklist

- Community-led • Not used for fundraising or political purposes
- Wide promotion via press releases and media alerts
- Held in accessible public venue (e.g., university, public library)
- Open to everyone (e.g. Veterans, service providers, private sector companies)
- Key stakeholders (state and local government officials, state VA, Military Service Organization and Veterans Service Organization leaders) are invited

What to expect from a Public Forum

Generally run about two hours. May include, but not limited to:

- Multimedia
- Planned program
- Special guests and speakers
- Panel discussions with subject matter experts
- Open forum discussion
- Resource presentations
- Q&A

Tools and Support

- The Veteran Experience team developed a framework for communities to use with tools to build a board, access lessons learned and best practices, and connect local resources.

MyVA Community Toolkit and map of fully formed boards (Click on Map):

- VetResources Community Network Veterans Experience (VA.gov)
- Contact for Questions: VAVEOCommunications@VA.gov

Collaboration and Action

- Meetings and forums are intended to provide the opportunity for:

  - Collaboration and coordination among stakeholders
  - Develop local solutions • Identify root cause challenges
  - Engage in holistic problem solving that can enhance effectiveness
  - The CVEBs promote opportunities to enhance service and address issues at the local level.