

8. Minority and Tribal Veterans

Introduction This topic provides information on the outreach program for minority and tribal Veterans.

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a. Background of Minority Veteran Outreach Each regional office Director will appoint a Minority Veterans Program Coordinator (MVPC) position to ensure that all VA benefits information are provided to Veterans, their spouses, and widows with dignity and respect regardless of race. The coordinator should work with other VA staff to identify gaps in benefits delivery to minority Veterans and afford equal access to and knowledge of all benefits (disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, insurance, survivors benefits and home loans).

The primary goal of the MVPC is to promote the use of VA benefit programs by the following minority groups:

- Asian Americans
 - African Americans
 - Hispanic Americans
 - Native Americans (American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians)
 - Pacific Islanders
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b. Duties of the Minority Veterans Program Coordinator The coordinator duties include:

- establishing and maintaining contact with minority organizations within the local area(s) served by the regional office to present information concerning VA benefits, to hear their concerns, and to answer questions.
- formulating and communicating program objectives that raise the consciousness and awareness of the Minority Veteran Program.
- supporting and initiating activities that inform and sensitize RO staff to the unique needs of minority Veterans (diversity inclusion).
- providing appropriate educational and outreach materials to targeted outreach groups.
- serving as a consultant and ombudsperson on issues pertaining to minority Veterans.

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**b. Duties of the
Minority
Veterans
Program
Coordinator**
(continued)

- keeping abreast of VA policies, laws, and regulations and their impact on minority Veterans.
 - reviewing and evaluation of statistical and narrative information to determine the utilization of the benefits and services by minority Veterans.
 - advocating on behalf of minority Veterans by making recommendations to improve service delivery with their RO.
 - participating as appropriate on local advisory committees related to Veterans to ensure that minority Veterans' concerns are adequately addressed in decision-making processes.
 - increasing local awareness of minority issues and developing strategies for increasing minority participation in all of the VA service delivery areas.
 - serving as liaison and advocate on the behalf of minority Veterans with Veteran Service Organizations; federal, state, and local agencies; and other local community stakeholders and serve providers to identify the unique needs of minority Veterans.
 - keeping RO director informed of all related activities performed in the regional office's jurisdiction.
 - ensuring that monthly activity report is reported accurately and within established timelines.
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**c. Critical
Elements for
Minority
Veterans
Program
Coordinator**

To meet program objectives, MVPCs shall:

- participate in any conference calls pertaining to minority Veteran outreach.
 - develop a written Operation Plan outlining outreach and activities to be conducted targeting minority Veterans.
 - conduct trend analyses of minority Veterans' concerns or issues and recommend proactive initiatives and corrective actions to resolve recurrent challenges to the RO Director.
 - prepare and submit activity reports highlighting outreach activities conducted and issues identified through tracking and trending analysis.
 - participate in a minimum of two town hall meetings annually and/or Veteran forums annually and meet with a minimum of three different stakeholders quarterly to promote the use of VA programs and services.
 - distribute and use culturally sensitive materials to inform minority Veterans and their families of the availability of VA services and benefits.
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d. Minority Veterans Program Coordinator Directory

For a complete list of coordinators go to:

http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/27/outreach/veterans/minority/min_index.htm

e. Skills and Abilities Needed for Minority Outreach

Individuals appointed as the Minority Veterans Program Coordinator must have the following skills and abilities:

- Knowledge and comprehension of Veterans benefit programs, current policies, and procedures;
 - Ability to be sensitive to the needs, concerns, and issues of minority Veterans;
 - Effective verbal written and interpersonal skills;
 - Strong analytical and problem-solving skills;
 - Sound administrative skills and judgment and an ability to work independently and manage time effectively.
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f. Minority Outreach References

Additional information concerning the minority outreach program may be found at the following references:

- Secretary VA Memorandum of April 25, 1995
 - Secretary VA Memorandum of March 12, 1999
 - 38 U.S.C., Part I, Chapter 3, Section 317, Center for Minority Veterans
 - VA Directive 0801 of April 15, 2005
 - VA Handbook 0801 of June 17, 2010
 - MVPC - Activity Report – End User Guide at: <http://vaww1.va.gov/mvpc/>
 - Access to down load the MVPC Quarterly Report at: <http://vaww1.va.gov/mvpc/admin/index.cfm>
 - (MVPC) Appointment Form (can be found at <http://vaww4.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA0875a.pdf>)
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g. Tribal Veterans Outreach

The Minority Veterans Coordinator will also be responsible for working with tribes in providing benefits information and assistance.