

## 2018 Current Fiscal Year Report: Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans

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<b>1. Department or Agency</b>	<b>2. Fiscal Year</b>
Department of Veterans Affairs	2018
<b>3. Committee or Subcommittee</b>	<b>3b. GSA Committee No.</b>
Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans	1331

<b>4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?</b>	<b>5. Current Charter</b>	<b>6. Expected Renewal Date</b>	<b>7. Expected Term Date</b>
No	04/16/2016		

<b>8a. Was Terminated During FiscalYear?</b>	<b>8b. Specific Termination Authority</b>	<b>8c. Actual Term Date</b>
No		

<b>9. Agency Recommendation for Next FiscalYear</b>	<b>10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?</b>	<b>10b. Legislation Pending?</b>
Continue	No	Not Applicable

**11. Establishment Authority** Statutory (Congress Created)

<b>12. Specific Establishment Authority</b>	<b>13. Effective Date</b>	<b>14. Committee Type</b>	<b>14c. Presidential?</b>
38 U.S.C. 545	10/09/1996	Continuing	No

**15. Description of Committee** Non Scientific Program Advisory Board

<b>16a. Total Number of Reports</b>	1
<b>16b. Report Date</b>	<b>Report Title</b>
05/10/2018	19th Annual Report

**Number of Committee Reports Listed: 1**

**17a. Open 2 17b. Closed 0 17c. Partially Closed 0 Other Activities 0 17d. Total 2**

### Meetings and Dates

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
On Wednesday February 7, the Committee will focus on VA mental health services and best practices for coordinating VA mental health services with RCS readjustment counseling services to better serve the combat-theater Veteran population. To this end Committee members will receive briefings from VA's mental health leadership on the types and distribution of psychiatric disorders currently being presented by Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation Enduring Freedoms Veterans and the various treatment regimens provided for their care inclusive of psychotherapy and psychopharmacology. VA Mental Health and RCS leadership will additionally present on the collaborative activities currently underway between RCS and the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention to achieve life-saving outcomes for at risk combat-theater Veterans and Service members. On Thursday February 8, the Committee will engage in strategic round table discussions with various other VHA program officials to review the objectives and anticipated outcomes for developing a "Veterans Engagement Subcommittee". This project is being initiated through collaborative partnership between RCS and the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (NC/PTSD) to strengthen the collaborative ties between the RCS and the NC/PTSD, to improve VA services and products through Veteran consumer feedback and to provide greater public awareness of VA and its achievements through quality services to Veterans and families.	02/06/2018	03/08/2018

On Tuesday, September 11, the agenda will feature briefings from the Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) Chief Officer regarding the current activities of the RCS Vet Centers to include the full scope of outreach and readjustment counseling being provided to combat-theater Veterans, Service members and their families. The briefing will also provide a status report regarding the RCS organizational transition to a single point of service within the general organizational transformation of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). On Wednesday, September 12, the Committee will focus on VA mental health services and best practices for coordinating VA mental health services with RCS readjustment counseling services to better serve the combat-theater Veteran population. To this end Committee members will receive briefings from VA's mental health leadership on the types and distribution of psychiatric disorders currently being presented by OIF/OEF Veterans and the various treatment regimens provided for their care inclusive of psychotherapy and psychopharmacology. VA Mental Health and RCS leadership will additionally present on the collaborative activities currently underway between RCS and the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention to achieve life-saving outcomes for at risk combat-theater Veterans and Service members. On Thursday, September 13, the Committee will engage in strategic discussions for the purpose of formulating conclusions, perspectives and recommendations for developing its 20th annual report to Congress.

09/11/2018 - 09/13/2018

**Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 2**

	<b>Current FY</b>	<b>Next FY</b>
<b>18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$7,000.00	\$16,200.00
<b>18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff</b>	\$64,000.00	\$64,000.00
<b>18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$14,135.00	\$40,000.00
<b>18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff</b>	\$3,380.00	\$10,000.00
<b>18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18d. Total</b>	\$88,515.00	\$130,200.00
<b>19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)</b>	0.30	0.30

**20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?**

To fully map the readjustment service needs of Veterans returning from military service in a combat theater, the Committee strives to understand the psychological, social, familial, economic and educational needs critical for a successful post-war readjustment to civilian life, as well as the psychosocial readjustment needs that accompany the physical wounds of war such as TBI and family supportive counseling. In conjunction with its needs assessments, the Committee reviews VHA's services available to meet these war-related readjustment needs. The Committee has identified several VA programs that are of value to Veterans' post-military readjustment to include: Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers; Mental Health with particular attention to VHA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Care Management and Social Work Services, PTSD and substance use treatment programs; Primary Care; polytrauma systems of care; homeless programs; and VBA's employment, education and service connection programs. Based on the unique needs of combat theater Veterans, Service members and their families, the

Committee will focus on critical readjustment service functions that not only match VA's priorities of 1) improving customer experiences, 2) implementing the MISSION Act, 3) executing the Electronic Health Record management contract, 4) modernizing and transforming our business processes; but also those that correspond with VHA's priorities of 1) building the trust of Veterans and the American people; 2) fostering our organizational learning; and 3) modernizing our systems. The Committee's reports will be widely distributed within VA, to Congressional leaders, and to the major Veterans service organizations.

**20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?**

The Committee is composed of war-zone Veterans, all of whom have shown some type of significant post-military career accomplishment in their respective communities. Among the membership are attorneys, health care and mental health providers, state directors of Veterans' services, and other various professionals, all of whom collectively represent the various branches of the U.S. Military. The Committee membership also maintains diversity of gender, ethnicity and geographical representation. The Committee provides a diversity of perspective and expertise indispensable to its function as a Veteran consumer representative body that reinforces VA's efforts to Improve the Veteran Experience and build their trust.

**20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?**

The Committee conducts at least two meetings each year. The input of this Committee continues to be positive, constructive, and helpful in informing VA's understanding of post-war readjustment problems and in advising the management of service delivery systems to meet the needs of returning war Veterans. The Committee contributes to quality improvements in VA programs in readjustment counseling, medical facility PTSD services, Veterans employment and family issues pertaining to readjustment, and resolving difficulties regarding compensation and disability for PTSD. The Committee's input also provides substantive contributions to improving Veterans' trust in and access to VA services. The significant level of utilization of VA programs in readjustment counseling, mental health and health care among the new Veteran populations who served in Afghanistan and Iraq suggests that this Committee's activities will be quite useful to VA for the foreseeable future. During FY 2018, the Committee held two meetings: February 2018 (Washington DC) and September 2018 (Washington DC)

**20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?**

The Committee provides an organized forum of motivated Veterans of various backgrounds and areas of expertise who review VA services and benefits, and provide

recommendations to the Secretary. The Committee's input represents that of well-informed and thoughtful consumer representatives who focus their attention on the effectiveness and coordination of VA and other agency services with particular attention to the readjustment needs of Veterans returning from OEF/OIF/OND. The Committee's conclusions and recommendations are generated from testimonies of Veteran consumers, VA and other agency service providers, and various other program officials that directly impacts Improved Community Care. The Committee also conducts thoughtful reviews of relevant research findings and program policy positions significant to Veteran services. VA service providers and management officials are sufficiently involved with ongoing issues of direct service delivery and program management to preclude this type of careful attention and review provided by the Committee regarding the interface between VA service providers and Veteran consumers. The Committee is the only organized external body that provides systematic review of Veterans' readjustment problems to include war-related PTSD. The Committee's input is directly relevant to building trust and positive experiences, and is of significant value for Suicide Prevention.

#### **20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?**

The Committee's meetings are open to the public, unless the Committee meets directly with Veteran consumers which would be closed in order to protect the patient privacy and in accordance with the Government in the Sunshine Act (5 U.S.C. section 552b).

#### **21. Remarks**

The Committee's Eighteenth Annual Report contained 9 recommendations primarily focused on organizational development of the Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) and the areas of needed collaborative alignment with VHA to ensure the continued success of the RCS Vet Center program mission for providing outreach and readjustment counseling to combat Veterans, Service members and their families. The report was submitted to Congress in September 2017 with the Secretary's written approval, either in full or in-principle, for all 9 recommendations. The Committee's Nineteen Annual Report will be submitted in December 2018.

#### **Designated Federal Officer**

Sherry L Moravy Designated Federal Officer

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Member Designation</b>
Blank, Arthur	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	Psychitrist in private Practice	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Brown, Nathaniel	03/09/2017	03/31/2019	Physchiatrist	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Bunch, Dean	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	Attorney at Law	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Giacoman, Augusto	03/09/2017	03/31/2019	Financial Services	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Hill, Laura	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	U.S. Forest Service Officer	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Horvath, Thomas	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	VA Psychiatrist, Retired	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Lewandowski, Cathleen	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	Social Work Educator	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Maney, Patt	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	County Court Judge	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
McKee, Dean	02/18/2015	12/31/2018	Retired Federal Employee	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

**Number of Committee Members Listed: 11**

**Narrative Description**

The Congressional mandate of this Committee to assist VA to improve the post-war readjustment of Veterans who served in combat is central to VA. The Committee's recommendations contribute to facilitating Veterans' post-war transition to civilian life and to the successful recovery of war-wounded Veterans.

**What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?**

Checked if Applies

- Improvements to health or safety
- Trust in government
- Major policy changes
- Advance in scientific research
- Effective grant making
- Improved service delivery
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements
- Other

**Outcome Comments**

Based on the Committee membership being composed of Veteran leaders in their home communities, a positive outcome is enhancement of public relations for VA.

**What are the cost savings associated with this committee?**

Checked if Applies

- None
- Unable to Determine
- Under \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$500,000
- \$500,001 - \$1,000,000
- \$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000
- \$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000
- Over \$10,000,000
- Cost Savings Other

**Cost Savings Comments**

NA

**What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?**

168

**Number of Recommendations Comments**

This is a total of recommendations for FY 2003 through FY 2018. The Committee focuses on producing a manageable number of well crafted recommendations.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?**

65%

**% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments**

Partial implementation of some recommendations is considered a positive outcome by the Committee.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?**

50%

**% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments**

All of the Committee's recommendations are given serious consideration by the agency and implemented to the extent feasible. 19th annual report is under review.

**Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?**

Yes  No  Not Applicable

**Agency Feedback Comments**

Agency feedback is provided annually in writing in response to the Committee's reports. Feedback is also provided verbally from participating VA officials during the course of the Committee's meetings each year.

**What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?**

Reorganized Priorities

Checked if Applies



- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Reallocated resources             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Issued new regulation             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Proposed legislation              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Approved grants or other payments | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Other                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**Action Comments**

The Committee's conclusions and recommendations have been referenced by the agency in Congressional reports and hearing statements.

**Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?**

No

**Grant Review Comments**

NA

**How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?**

Checked if Applies

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Contact DFO               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Online Agency Web Site    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Online Committee Web Site | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Online GSA FACA Web Site  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Publications              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**Access Comments**

Committee members networking within their respective communities with other local community leaders provides additional informal access to the Committee's work.