



State of Maryland

2021 REPORT State Government Article §9-944(e)

State Government- Department of Veterans Affairs- Veterans' Services
Specialists/Submitted April 15, 2021

Submitted by: The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

2021 Report State Government Article §9-944(e)**To: Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and Maryland General Assembly****From: George Owings, Secretary, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs****Status of the Veterans' Services Specialists in State Government (SB857/HB1275)**

Introduced during the 2017 Maryland Legislative Session and signed in to law by Governor Hogan on May 25, 2017, SB857/HB1275 created Veterans' Services Specialists in State Government to coordinate services with the Outreach and Advocacy Program Director in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Specialists attend training, provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with certain information and post information on their respective Department or Agency websites. Information required for posting on websites includes veteran services offered by the respective Department or Agency and a link to the Department of Veterans Affairs Outreach and Advocacy Program. The MDVA continues to work with Departments and Agencies to have this information placed on websites.

The Act also requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to coordinate meetings and an annual training, and submit a progress report each January to the Governor and Maryland General Assembly. The Act took effect October 1, 2017. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 health pandemic two meetings and the annual training were suspended. However, a plan is in place to make up for missed meetings in 2021.

Meetings

Hosted by the Maryland Stadium Authority, the Program's first meeting of 2020 took place February 18 and 17 liaisons attended. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss goals for 2020, suggest meeting locations and agenda topics. The meeting concluded with a tour of Oriole Park.

(Pictured at left: VSS liaisons outside Oriole Park, Veterans Memorial)

In March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic most liaisons were assigned to telework status and the program was put on hold.

A second meeting was held November 19 and 25 liaisons attended. The meeting was virtual and liaisons completed the US Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention SAVE training. The training was facilitated by Nikole Jones, Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the VA Maryland Healthcare System.

Goals for CY21

- Hold four quarterly meetings with presentation topics suggested by liaisons
- Hold three education sessions to make up for missed meetings in 2020
- Hold one annual training combining the ad hoc joint county veteran commission group and VSS program liaisons

Contact

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
16 Francis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-260-3838

Program Contact

Dana Burl
Outreach and Advocacy Director
410-260-3842