Office of Military and Veterans Legal Assistance Advisory Group, Washington State Attorney General’s Office

Friday, October 1, 2021 via Zoom

Present: Joyce Bruce, Manveer Sandhu, Ben Austin, Madeline Shojai, Shaun Tucker, Saleena Salango, Gavriel Jacobs, Sarah Morehead, Michael Terasaki, Michael Addams, Paul Cruz, Mariah Hanley, Kevin Devine, Laurie Davenport

11:00 AM: Meeting brought to order, introductions.

11:05 AM: Discussion and adoption of previous meeting minutes from July 8, 2021 meeting.

11:07 AM: Joyce updates on OMVLA activities
   • Requests for assistance since last meeting: 57. Many of those civil legal requests were related to family law matters, landlord tenant, and consumer protection related issues.

11:08 AM: Joyce introduces OMVLA’s three AmeriCorps Vista Members
   • Shaun Tucker: Resource Building Capacity VISTA
   • Madeline Shojai: Volunteer Partnerships VISTA
   • Ben Austin: Outreach Coordinator VISTA

11:19 AM: Joyce updates on OMVLA Subcommittees
   • Next steps are outreach plan and input on plan
   • Reminder of subcommittees: outreach to veterans of color, women veterans, veterans with honorable discharge, legislative changes that affect veterans

11:21 AM: Joyce updates on next committee meeting date and solicits discussion for frequency of meetings
   • Final meeting of 2021 is November <rest of date>
   • Doodle poll forthcoming for 2022 meetings
   • Michael A. proposed the idea of setting a fixed meeting day and time to make planning easier, group discussion to get a preliminary meeting day and time
   • Joyce will send a doodle poll for Mondays at 11AM and will keep working on frequency/schedule/attendance issues that may arise

11:28 AM: Joyce updates on OMVLA bylaws
- No standardized process for removal processes across the AGO, OMVLA has authority to decide how to codify this in bylaws and will dedicate time in next meeting to review bylaws and make changes
- OPMA defining electronic voting; AAG prelim: no definition of electronic voting; waiting on additional guidance on voting in accordance with OPMA to include in bylaws

11:30 AM: Roundtable discussion
- Michael T: eviction cases and right to counsel – how are the numbers and how are the referrals going? Eviction Defense hotline is available to direct clients to appropriate counsel
- Mariah: VA Guidance on “don’t ask don’t tell” means that claims for VA benefits must be granted if release was due solely to DADT; awaiting to see how this will play out and how character of service review by review board will impact any claims
  - Kevin: just hearing about this & will find out more info, also curious to see how character of service review will impact the new guidance
  - Paul: DADT is one of the easier discharges to upgrade
  - Joyce: OMVLA hasn’t received requests yet but AAG volunteer is available to help
- Laurie: JBLM visit to legal aid office to do presentation, answer questions, and make connections; City of Tacoma “veterans village” for homeless veterans
  - Joyce: OMVLA can provide brochures for JBLM visit
- Joyce: OMVLA here to amplify projects and collaborate when possible; CLE on discharge upgrades and looking for sponsors

11:48 AM: Good of the order

11:49 AM: Adjourned