



# **Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.** **NATIONAL MINORITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

## **NATIONAL MINORITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE POLICY AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT**

### **Section 1 – Background**

1. The Minority Affairs Committee is established as a standing committee at the national level of Vietnam Veterans of America in accordance with the **Constitution of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Article 1, Section 7, Paragraph B. It is, further, defined in Appendix II**, as follows: *“The Minority Affairs Committee shall identify and develop programs of awareness of, and programs of interest to, minority veterans of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and shall seek to expand the membership of minorities in the Vietnam Veterans of America. The Committee shall coordinate its activities closely with the President, other Officers, and committee chairpersons.”*

### **Section 2 – Purpose**

1. *“Committees shall serve to advise the President and the Board of Directors as to matters germane to their respective areas of the subject-matter jurisdiction, and perform such other duties as the President of the Board of Directors shall from time to time assign to them.”* This committee’s area of jurisdiction is diverse ethnic awareness.

### **Section 3 – Membership**

1. Our vision is a committee and veterans’ organization that promotes and values its diverse ethnic members within its organizational structure. The Chairperson of the committee “shall be appointed by the President, with approval of the Board of Directors.” The Chairperson of the committee, further, *“shall appoint the members thereof, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.”* “The committee chair may nominate qualified non-members to serve as non-voting Special Advisors to the committee.”

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## Section 4 – Implementation

1. The mission of the Minority Affairs Committee is twofold. First, it is to ensure that the unique circumstances, needs and concerns of our diverse ethnic veterans are valued, respected and addressed. The second is to ensure that the inclusive organizational mission respects and values the unique circumstances of our diverse ethnic veterans.

2. The Minority Affairs Committee will be working to ensure that the health care needs of our diverse ethnic veterans and their dependents are identified, addressed and responsibly serviced by the Veterans Administration, its staff, facilities and programs. As a part of the national organization we are dedicated to ensuring that the VA is adequately, consistently and sufficiently funded in order to meet the needs of our veterans. The Committee Chair serves as a member of the Government Affairs Committee.

3. Three goals critical to the Minority Affairs Committee's success in the next two years have been identified.

A. The first goal is *Outreach to Veterans*, which will be pursued using several methods.

1. One method is the preparation of bimonthly articles for the Minority Affairs Committee column in the *VVA VETERAN* magazine.

2. A second method is to coordinate with National and regional diverse ethnic veteran organizations and individuals to recruit *diverse* ethnic members and help create new VVA chapters.

3. Another is to participate in local, regional and National VVA membership recruitment/information booths (such as on the DC Mall during Memorial Day or Veterans Day holidays), or maintain booths at national/regional conventions of ethnic minority organizations, or at Native American POWWOWS or to meet with members of the Congressional Veterans Caucuses.

4. Finally, the committee will represent diverse ethnic veterans' concerns at public hearings of the Veterans Administration (VA), VA Commissions, the CARES Commission and other similar federal panels as well as those at the local, regional, and state levels.

B. A second goal is *Working Closely with the Veterans Administration Center For Minority Veterans and the VA Minority Veterans Advisory Panel* on issues that are related to the VA's benefits and services available to diverse ethnic veterans; to obtain data that may have been compiled by the VA regarding diverse ethnic veterans' health issues; discussing issues of inappropriate or maltreatment of diverse ethnic veterans; and assisting the *Center* and *Panel* in compiling information about the needs of diverse ethnic veterans.

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C. The final goal is the *Development of a Political Agenda*, which includes maintaining, updating, retiring or introducing convention resolutions; reviewing and supporting relevant proposed and enacted legislation; submitting issues to elective officials to be introduced as legislative proposals; and, communicating with elective officials to advocate or provide testimony of diverse ethnic veteran issues.

4. A possible fourth goal to identify is *Working Closely with the Veterans Administration Center For Minority Veterans and the VA Minority Veterans Advisory Panel* on requesting that this branch of the VA set about doing as we have done in forever changing the mind set away from the notion of “Minority” to that of “Ethnic Awareness.”

## **Section 5 – Meetings**

1. The committee as a whole shall meet at least three times per year corresponding to the National Board meeting dates in the fall, winter and spring. Any other meetings deemed necessary shall be arranged in such a way as to minimize the financial impact to the organization and the committee budget. Generally this is performed using current trends in technology such as conference calling and email.

## **Section 6 – Funding**

1. The committee will be assigned an annual operating budget, developed with the assistance of the Finance Committee and approved by the Board. Any committee projects involving additional expenses not currently budgeted must be planned for enough in advance to allow full presentation to, and consideration by, the Finance Committee.

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