

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Governor's and Mayor's Challenge Monthly Team Leader Call

October 27, 2025

2:00-3:00pm ET

Overview and Introductions



Ben Barrowman, MBA

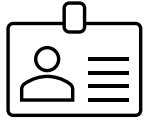
Senior Project Associate

SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and
their Families Technical Assistance
Center at Policy Research Associates, Inc.

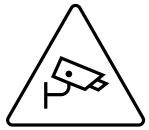
Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Ensuring a Safe and Inclusive Virtual Meeting Space



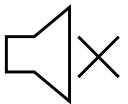
Set your name to how you want to be called during this virtual meeting – not “iPhone” or “computer”



Disable any AI transcription or recording services and use Zoom’s live transcription setting instead



Turn on your video during discussions if you are able



Mute your microphone unless you are speaking to the group



Use the “raise hand” or chat function to communicate with the group

Agenda

- ☐ Participant Introductions
- ☐ Welcome and Announcements
- ☐ Discussion – Transitioning Service Members (TSM)
- ☐ Q&A
- ☐ Wrap-up and Adjourn

Participant Introductions

Please introduce yourself in the chat!

- Name
- Title
- Agency
- What team(s) you are representing
- If this is your first team leader call

Federal Welcome and Announcements



Cicely K. Burrows-McElwain, MSW, LCSW-C

Deputy Director of Operations for Special Projects
Office of Suicide Prevention
Veterans Health Administration
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veteran Buddy Check Week



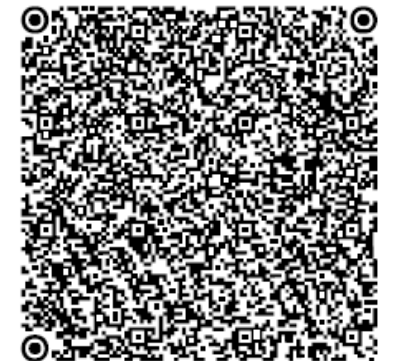
Veteran Buddy Check encourages Veterans to connect or reconnect with their Veteran friends—just to check in.

As part of the effort, Veteran Buddy Check Week takes place **October 20-24, 2025**, and builds on the success of both the American Legion's Buddy Check and the Veteran Wellness Alliance's Get Involved programs.

Take the Pledge, Take the Training, Find Buddies

Website: <https://department.va.gov/veterans-experience/va-veteran-buddy-checks>

Pledge: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/signup/40119>



Scan this QR code to visit the VA Veteran Buddy Checks webpage

Transitioning Service Members (TSM)

Poll – Current Efforts

Are there any current efforts to support TSM and their families in your state/territory/community?

(not necessarily related to Governor's/Mayor's Challenge work)

A. Yes

B. No

C. I don't know

Poll – Current Efforts Status

If there are current efforts to support TSM and their families in your state/territory/community, what is the status of those efforts?

- A. Planning Phase
- B. Initiated/Ongoing
- C. Stalled
- D. Unsure
- E. N/A – there are no current efforts I’m aware of

Poll - Partners

Who else is doing TSM-related work in your community besides the Department of Veterans Affairs? [check all that apply]

- A. Other Federal Agencies
- B. Other State Agencies
- C. Local Government
- D. National Guard Bureau
- E. Other Military Partner
- F. Tribal Community or Organization
- G. Community/Non-Profit/Volunteer Organizations
- H. Universities or Other Higher Education

Poll – Team Partners

If you were to begin working on a TSM initiative, what level of effort would be needed to engage the necessary partners?

- A. High – would need a lot of effort to engage partners
- B. Medium – some partners are already on our team
- C. Low – most/all partners are already on our team
- D. Unsure

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Please share what you know about current initiatives or programs that are in place in your state/territory/community to support service members and their families as they transition out of the military.

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❖ Please describe the key components or strategies you have identified that support the success of TSM programs.
- ❖ How are you tracking that success?
- ❖ What are the biggest challenges or barriers you've experienced when implementing programs to support military transitions?

Poll - CRDIRS

Does your Department of Veteran Services (or an equivalent office) have access to the Certificate of Release and Discharge Information Reporting System (CRDIRS) system?

This system provides states with a weekly excel file containing info on DD214s for that state.

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

Poll – VA Enrollment and Engagement

Does your Governor's or Mayor's Challenge team have existing pathways for connecting TSMs to local VA Healthcare and Benefits?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

CHAT POLL:

Are there any other TSM-related programs and resources you or your team would like to get connected to or learn more about?

Please write your answers in the chat!

Q&A

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Upcoming Team Leader Call Dates



Final Mondays of the Month
2:00-3:00 p.m. ET

Next Meeting: November 24, 2025
Topic: Breakout Discussions

Ongoing Technical Assistance

SMVF TA Center Upcoming Events



SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center would like to welcome you to attend any of our upcoming events.

Upcoming events calendar at
<https://www.samhsa.gov/smvf-ta-center/events>



Monthly email round-up to keep
you up to date



**Your TA Center Liaison and VA
Program Manager!**

Thank You!

For technical assistance questions,
please contact
SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center at
Policy Research Associates, Inc.
smvftacenter@prainc.com