



SAN MATEO COUNTY VETERANS' COMMISSION

STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2019-2022



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
VETERANS COMMISSION

SAN MATEO COUNTY VETERANS' COMMISSION

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Linda Meyer – Air Force and Air Force Reserves

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George Smith – Marines

MEMBERSHIP AS OF FEBRUARY 2019





INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the County Manager’s Office and the Human Services Agency spearheaded a study to help identify and address the needs of approximately 32,000 veterans residing in San Mateo County. Many other County departments, as well as veterans working for the County, participated in the process. Drawing from primary data such as interviews and focus groups and secondary data like statistical information, the goal of the study was to learn more about the needs of veterans in the County, the services currently available to them, and the areas of unmet need.

The San Mateo County Veterans Needs Assessment 2014 found that while many veterans residing in the County have stable employment, housing and social support networks, some veterans require additional support, including access to benefits and safety net services, mental and behavioral health services and affordable housing.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDED:

- More than half of the veterans in the County are age 65 years or older. This group of veterans reported the need for assistance in accessing civilian and veterans’ benefits.

- While 95% of veterans are male, a higher percentage of younger veterans are female - close to 20% of veterans ages 18-34 and close to 10% of veterans ages 35-54 in the County. Women veterans reported the need for additional services targeted to them, and increased awareness by all veteran-serving agencies of the issues specifically confronting women veterans.
- Veterans are overrepresented in the County’s homeless population, comprising approximately 12% of its homeless population, while comprising only 6% of its overall adult population.
- With San Mateo County being one of the least affordable housing markets in the state, access to affordable housing was identified as a need by veterans consulted for the study.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS INCLUDED:

- Expanding education and outreach efforts to veterans who are seniors so they have better access to critical benefits and services;
- Bringing greater recognition and visibility to issues that disproportionately impact women veterans, such

as military sexual trauma and the deficit of services targeted to women veterans' needs;

- Developing policy recommendations which would help increase access to affordable housing for veterans and their families; and
- Recommending initiatives that facilitate the provision of emergency or transitional shelter and ancillary services and assistance to homeless veterans.

As the result of this needs assessment, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, on June 2, 2015, took action to appoint a nine member Veterans' Commission and defined the purpose of the Commission as follows:

- To promote programs that foster the well-being of veterans in San Mateo County;
- To increase the understanding and visibility of issues that disproportionately impact underserved segments of the veterans' population, including, but not limited to, seniors, women, LGBTQ members, and the homeless;
- To provide outreach and support to underserved segments of the veterans' community in San Mateo County;
- To develop initiatives to support San Mateo County veterans and their families; and

- To report and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as needed, but not less frequently than once every twelve (12) months.

DUTIES, FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

The duties, functions and powers of the Commission were defined in the founding resolution (#073812):

- To advise and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors;
- To develop and implement an annual workplan;
- To provide a public forum for input from the veterans' community to identify unmet needs;
- To work with existing veterans' advocacy and service organizations to help coordinate systems of care and benefits;
- To act as an advocate for veterans, taking positions pertaining to federal, state and local policies, programs, procedures and any legislation affecting veterans and their families; and
- To fulfill other duties and engage in other activities as directed by the Board of Supervisors





2018 PRIORITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

VETERAN ACCESS TO BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- Hosted Third Annual Veteran of the Year Luncheon.
- Supported the Adopt-a-Unit 50-year celebration for the 101st Airborne Division from Ft. Campbell, KY.
- Participated in planning and supporting the County's first Women Veteran Summit.
- Supported the County's extension of Reservist Benefits for employees called to active duty in support of the Global War on Terror.
- Provided the featured speaker for the Veteran's Day ceremony at the Golden Gate National Cemetery.
- Assisted an Eagle Scout project that resulted in the donation of 75 backpacks for homeless and in-need veterans.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

- At the beginning of 2019, by the county's count, there were 69 veterans experiencing homelessness with 31 in emergency shelters, 4 in transitional housing and 34 unsheltered.
- Actively worked with the Human Services Agency and other agencies in finding shelter for homeless vets and those in need.
- Actively supported the approval of the Millbrae Station project which will provide 20% of the units for veterans.

2019 PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

- Host the annual Veteran of the Year Luncheon.
- Develop and begin implementation of a strategic plan for the Commission to follow over the next three years.
- Continue to work with and support the Human Services Agency and other local organizations efforts to find housing for those in-need veterans.



ANNUAL VETERAN OF THE YEAR LUNCHEON



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

During its January 2019 meeting, the Commission met with Patricia Brown, a planning consultant, who suggested an ambitious timeline for strategic plan development. The Commission added one special meeting to its calendar and set a timeline for completing the Strategic Plan.

The following table documents the Veterans' Commission meeting times and topics.

DATE	PLANNING FOCUS
February 2019 Special Meeting	Confirm mission Explore values External and Internal environmental scanning Review Accomplishments to date
March 2019 Extend Regular Meeting	Complete environmental scanning Discuss possible areas for focus in the strategic plan
April 2019 Planning Sub-committee	Sub-committee works on draft goal statements
May 2019 Extend Regular Meeting	Full Commission reviews and provides input to draft strategic goals and objectives
June 2019 Planning Sub-committee	Sub-committee reviews draft strategic plan and develops a one year work plan for Commission consideration
July 2019	Full Commission reviews/adopts Strategic Plan and Work Plan for 2019-20

The Strategic Plan sets the direction for the Veteran's Commission to address the trends and challenges it is encountering now and in the years to come. It is intended for a variety of audiences, including the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, the veteran's community in San Mateo County (veterans and their families), County employees, and members of the public.

The plan can be used as follows:

- **The Veterans' Commission** will use the Strategic Plan as the basis for developing an annual work plan for implementing goals and objectives designed to achieve its strategic vision and assessing progress toward those goals.
- **The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors** can view the plan to identify Commission priorities and monitor alignment with the Shared Vision 2025.
- **County Employees** can use the Strategic Plan to obtain information about the Commission's vision, mission and goals.
- **Members of the Public** can use this document to obtain information about the Commission's work.



Today's Program

- Welcoming Remarks
- San Mateo County Veterans Services Office
- Presenters
 - Veterans Benefits Administration
 - Meeting the Health Care Needs of Women Veterans
 - Women Veterans Affairs, California Department of Veterans Affairs
- Lunch
- Keynote: Stories, Service and Military Sexual Trauma
- Speaker Panels
 - Reintegration: Personal Stories of Transitioning Women Veterans
 - Veterans Treatment Court: A Client Experience
- Closing Remarks



ALIGNING WITH THE COUNTY'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Veterans' Commission Strategic Plan is closely aligned with the direction of the County's Shared Vision 2025, specifically contributing to the following community outcomes:

- **Healthy Community:** Our neighborhoods are safe and provide residents with access to quality health care and seamless services.
- **Prosperous Community:** Our economic strategy fosters innovation in all sectors, creates jobs, and builds community and educational opportunities for all residents.
- **Livable Community:** Our growth occurs near transit, promotes affordable, livable connected communities.
- **Collaborative Community:** Our leaders forge partnerships, promote regional solutions, with informed and engaged residents, and approach issues with fiscal accountability and concern for future impacts.

VISION STATEMENT

This vision is a description of the Commission's hopes for its target community or constituency. It answers the question, "What changes do we hope to see as the result of our work?"

The Veterans' Commission envisions San Mateo County as a place where veterans and their families thrive.

MISSION OF THE VETERANS' COMMISSION

A mission statement is a brief expression of the Commission's purpose. It should answer the questions "Why do we exist?" and "What, at the most basic level, do we do?"

The mission of the Veterans' Commission is to promote public awareness, advocacy, programs and policies that enhance the well-being of veterans and their families in San Mateo County.

VALUES

The values statement defines the principles on which the Commission is built, and that guide its planning, operations and programs. It answers the question "What do we believe in?"

The San Mateo County Veterans' Commission pursues its work based on the following values:

- Implement ongoing communication with community leaders and providers to gather and share information.
- Develop collaborative relationships with community nonprofits and other veteran organizations to assure the best possible outcome for veterans and their families.
- Obtain data and information from multiple sources to understand current needs of veterans and their families.
- Work diligently to serve veterans, their families, stakeholders and those who provide resources to benefit veterans.
- Advance the interests of veterans and their families with purpose and passion.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Together, goals and objectives define desired outcomes resulting from the Commission's work. They may be focused on the organization's programming or internal operations. Progress toward achieving goals and objectives should be measurable. While the terms are often used interchangeably, goals are generally more comprehensive or far-reaching than objectives. Framed clearly, they answer the question "What do we want to accomplish?"

GOAL I

DEVELOP AN INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT NEEDS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- **Objective A:** Actively participate in the development of the 2020 needs assessment conducted by San Mateo County.
- **Objective B:** Schedule regular reports to the Commission from key veterans services providers describing what services are well utilized or under-utilized by veterans and their families.

GOAL II

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A CURRENT, COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE ONLINE CATALOG OF ALL RELEVANT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SMC VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- **Objective A:** Identify existing lists/inventories of services available to veterans and their families at the federal, state and local level.
- **Objective B:** Compile listings from various sources into one comprehensive catalog for San Mateo County.
- **Objective C:** Ensure that the catalog of services is maintained and updated annually.

GOAL III

ENSURE THAT ALL SAN MATEO COUNTY VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE AWARE OF THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO THEM AND UNDERSTAND HOW THEY CAN ACCESS THOSE SERVICES

- **Objective A:** Continue and enhance current efforts to raise awareness of needs and services available to address those needs.
- **Objective B:** Utilize best practices employed by other County Commissions and veterans resources to raise awareness of available services.
- **Objective C:** Consider the development of a San Mateo County Veterans' Resources Website to provide easy access for those seeking information about services available to veterans and their families.

GOAL IV

CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS REGARDING POLICIES AND PROJECTS THAT SERVE THE NEEDS OF VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

- **Objective A:** Identify opportunities for the Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors to advocate on behalf of veterans and their families.
- **Objective B:** Document the Commission's advocacy efforts and their impact on an annual basis.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Each year, the Commission will develop an annual work plan that specifies specific action steps related to its strategic goals and objectives. This work plan will include the defined action steps in each goal area, the person/persons responsible for the actions, a timeline and indicators of progress that will enable the Commission to monitor progress during the year and at year's end, when the work plan is reviewed and updated.

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