

# Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida

## Administration Policies and Procedures

### Office Procedures

#### Equipment

Office equipment owned and maintained by PVACF shall be those normal items of equipment which are deemed necessary for the administrative operation of the Chapter. This might include such items as copy machines, computers, printers, tablets and office furniture.

The purchase of any major item of office equipment costing over \$1000 shall be approved by the Board of Directors. All office equipment and supplies will be ordered by the Executive Director or Office Manager.

#### Supplies

Office supplies shall be ordered by only one designated person, usually the Office Manager. Generally, supplies shall be stored in a common supply cabinet where they can be obtained as needed by the Chapter employees, officers, and volunteers.

### Correspondence/Communications

#### Chapter Roster

The official point of contact for National PVA reporting purposes for all officers, board of director members, and program coordinators, shall be the PVACF Chapter office.

#### Authority

Employees other than the Executive Director are not authorized to correspond officially with those individuals and entities outside the Chapter without prior approval from the Executive Director or President. Any communication prepared and sent by an employee other than those authorized may be cause for dismissal.

#### Internal

Internal correspondences are those notes, memoranda, letters, and other means of communications that are between officers and other volunteers within the Chapter. All internal communication is the sole property of the Chapter.

#### Incoming Correspondence

**The designated staff member shall open all incoming mail except that which might be marked "personal" and/or "confidential", or any other restrictive marking on the outside**

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**of the parcel or envelope. If there is any question about which individual should receive the mail, the President and/or Executive Director shall make that determination. Any Officer, Board of Directors member, or Program Director receiving time sensitive mail shall be contacted immediately; otherwise the office staff shall contact anyone who received mail ASAP. For accountability purposes; all email communications will be forwarded. No personal phone numbers will be given out. A message will be taken and the individual will be contacted with the inquirers contact information.**

### **Outgoing Mail**

Only official Chapter mail shall be posted through the office.

### **External MAIL**

External communications are those which are completed by a member of PVACF with a person or entity outside the Chapter. Such external communications shall be professional in every way, and shall be prepared on Chapter letterhead. All communication (electronic, written or in any other way) shall be approved in advance by the President or Executive Director.

While all members have the right to contact National PVA at any time; no external communications shall be prepared outside the individual's direct responsibilities and expertise.

No external communications shall be made which might misrepresent the Chapter or the national organization.

As a member of the National PVA Board of Directors, the Chapter National Director shall have the authority to communicate with any national officer or other member of the National BOD and National Staff without prior approval of any member of the Chapter leadership.

### **Electronic Communications**

Electronic communications may be internal or external and include electronic mail and facsimile transmissions. The same policy shall apply to electronic communications as apply to written correspondence.

### **Contract Procedures**

PVACF has the authority to enter into any legal contract for services, goods or equipment as may be deemed necessary and appropriate for Chapter operations and shall be signed by the President and/or Executive Director. The Executive Director is authorized to sign contracts pertaining to the day to day operations without board approval.

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## **Legal Matters**

### **Corporate Counsel**

The first step in seeking legal counsel should be for the Executive Director and/or Chapter President to contact the National Legal Department of PVA.

The corporate legal counsel of PVACF shall be an attorney-at-law who is licensed to practice law in the State of Florida, but that person need not be in active practice. That corporate counsel may be under contract with the Chapter, and may be hired by the Chapter President after consultation with the Executive Committee. The corporate counsel may be a member of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, but shall not be an elected officer of PVACF, nor shall he/she serve in any other paid or appointed position with the Chapter.

### **Complaint Procedures**

The following sets forth the policy and procedures to be followed by the Executive Committee in adjudicating complaints against the Chapter, Employees, or against individual members of the Chapter. These rules shall be construed to secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive Determination of every proceeding while fully protecting the rights of all Parties involved therein.

### **Complaints**

Any member Chapter of PVA or any individual; a member of PVA or not may bring a complaint against any member Chapter or any individual member for violation of the duties and obligations of PVA members as set out in PVA's Administrative Guide. Such complaints shall be submitted in writing to the Vice President and shall clearly describe the specific nature of the complaint, provide supporting data for the allegations made therein, and identify the name(s) of the individual(s) bringing the complaint. If the complaint is against the Vice President, the complaint shall be submitted to the Chapter President.

### **Duty of the Vice President**

The Vice President shall review all complaints thoroughly, ensuring that they comply with submission requirements. After discussing the complaint with the submitter and with the individual(s) against whom the complaint is made, he/she shall then submit the complaint to the Executive Committee with a recommendation for that committee's action.

### **Authority of the Executive Committee**

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The Executive Committee shall investigate and take action on any formal complaint filed against the Chapter or against an individual member. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to reprimand, suspend, expel, or take any other reasonable disciplinary action against any member found to have violated membership duties or obligations. The Executive Committee of PVACF shall only have the authority to suspend or expel a person from membership in the Chapter, not from National PVA. The findings and action of the Executive Committee shall be subject to review and approval by the Chapter Board of Directors. The Executive Committee may, at its discretion, appoint an investigative committee to determine facts.

### **Procedure**

The Executive Committee shall appoint, on a case-by-case basis, a person to handle the filing of the complaint and the representation of interests of the petitioner.

### **Notice and Investigative Committee**

Within ten days following receipt of the complaint, the Executive Committee shall furnish (by registered or certified mail) a copy of the complaint to the member against whom the complaint was made and to the President of the chapter. Within the same time period, the Executive Committee may, at its discretion, appoint an Investigative Committee composed of three members of PVACF, none of whom shall be parties to the complaint.

The Investigative Committee shall gather all facts pertinent to the complaint through review of documents and/or interview of persons with knowledge of facts relevant to the complaint, and shall seek a response to the complaint from the member against whom the allegations are made. The Investigative Committee shall prepare a written report summarizing its findings and setting forth the evidence supporting those findings. This report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee within 30 days following appointment of the Investigative Committee. The Executive Committee may solicit additional information in order to clarify the report. The Executive Committee shall then take appropriate action based on the findings and on their authority to act.

### **Right of Appeal**

Any person who has been the subject of disciplinary action in a formal complaint proceeding has the right to appeal such action to the Chapter Board of Directors or to the National President of PVA within 30 days.

### **Organizational Memberships/Representation**

It is desirable to provide PVACF representation to other organizations, especially

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those that are for the benefit of veterans and the disability community. At every opportunity, PVACF should attempt to be represented in those organizations and agencies involved in transportation, accessibility, advocacy, legislation, recreation, employment, health care, and other matters of concern to veterans and disabled persons.

### **Government Agencies**

Active participation in government agencies will usually require an appointment by the Governor or some other government official in order to serve as a board, committee, or commission member. Such appointments of PVACF members should be sought at every opportunity and at every level of statewide government. It is imperative that applications and recommendations for appointment be in the best interests of PVACF by ensuring that the best possible representation is provided.

Consequently, no person shall serve or attempt to serve as an official PVACF representative without the express written approval of the Chapter President, subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

Particularly appropriate government bodies for PVACF representation would include, but not be limited to the following:

- Mass transportation agencies;
- Building/construction agencies;
- Veterans' affairs advisory committees;
- Boards who consider employment rights;
- Special event planning committees;
- Any other government body or agency where accessibility, civil rights, human rights and benefits for veterans and/or the disability community might be a matter of discussion or concern.

The Chapter Advocacy Director and/or the Director of Government Relations shall be active participants in efforts relative to pending new or revised legislation throughout every session of the Florida State Legislature. Likewise, PVACF shall make every effort to keep itself informed and, when appropriate, be a vocal participant in similar matters at the county and local community levels throughout the state.

### **Veterans' Organizations**

PVACF members are encouraged, when eligible, to be active participants in other veterans' service organizations. When representation is requested at other such organizations and no member of PVACF has been designated as a representative, the Chapter President shall be the official representative. The most viable representative in those organizations would be a PVA member who

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is also a member of the particular organization.

### **Disability Organizations**

PVACF should be represented (or at least have a working relationship) with such local organizations as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Cerebral Palsy Association, Easter Seal Society, American Association of Retired Persons, and Centers for Independent Living Programs. If a PVACF member is eligible for membership in a specific organization, the most viable representation would result from such an appointment. Otherwise, the President shall serve as the PVACF representative when required.

### **Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations**

When a member is so inclined, they are encouraged to seek membership in such organizations as Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, Lions, Moose, Eagles, and other such organizations. The President and/or Executive Director are encouraged to seek Chapter representation when appropriate.

### **Political Organizations**

PVACF does not presume to suggest any member's political affiliations or voting preferences. However, it is strictly forbidden for PVACF, as an organization, to financially or vocally support or endorse any candidate for election to any political office. No member shall make any statement, verbal or written, which could be misunderstood as support or opposition of any political candidate by the Chapter. By the same token, it shall be expressly prohibited for any PVACF member, as a Chapter representative, to participate in any civil disobedience while participating in political events.

### **Payment of Dues**

If any Chapter member is appointed to serve as a direct representative of PVACF, the Chapter will pay dues and initiation fees.

### **General**

Any person who serves as a representative of PVACF is the voice and the vote of the Chapter. With that in mind, all representatives shall use caution to ensure that misrepresentation does not occur. Should there be any question relative to the Chapter's vote or voice in matter of business being conducted; the PVACF member(s) shall discuss the matter with the President and/or the Board of Directors. If time does not permit such discussion, the representative shall abstain from participation in that matter of business. In such a case, if the matter has important bearing on the chapter and its membership, the Chapter representative shall suggest that the item of business is tabled pending

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clarification. In any situation where personal opinion does not coincide with that of the Board of Directors, the decision of the board shall prevail and shall serve to dictate the Chapter's position. Misrepresentation by any member will result in sanction by the Chapter Board of Directors.

### **Attendance at Conventions and Seminars**

It is imperative that the chapter be represented at meetings, seminars, workshops, and conventions conducted by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and other organizations. Such representation is particularly important relative to the activities of organizations and agencies within the State of Florida who are involved in veterans' affairs and legislation/advocacy for the disabled.

### **Paralyzed Veterans of America Conventions, Board Meetings and Seminars**

The PVA convention is conducted annually at locations, which are announced at least one year prior to the event. Attendance at the convention by the Chapter National Director is an absolute requirement in that he/she is the Chapter's representative to the PVA National Board of Directors. Expenses for the National Director's attendance at the Annual Convention and the Mid-Year Meeting of the Board of Directors are paid by the national organization and include aid/attendance expenses when such has been approved by the National President.

PVACF's Chapter President and Executive Director should attend the PVA National Convention whenever possible. Unless otherwise specified, all expenses for the President's and Executive Director's attendance at the convention and mid-year board meeting shall be paid by the chapter, to include approved aid/attendant expenses. Those allowable expenses shall include travel, lodging, meals, per-diem, program fees, and any other necessary expenses, which are directly related to the President's and Executive Director's attendance and participation. Expenses for an aid/attendant will be paid in accordance with established chapter travel policy.

At the discretion of the Board of Directors and, when considered in the best interests of PVACF, other persons may be approved for attendance at specific PVA events at Chapter expense.

The national organization conducts various seminars and workshops, which are structured for the benefit of PVA Chapters. When considered beneficial and appropriate, PVACF should be represented at such events by the Chapter officer or appointee whose responsibilities within the Chapter are commensurate with the topic of the workshop or seminar. Such representation shall be the decision of the Board of Directors, to include selection of the person to attend. All expenses for such representation shall be paid by the chapter to include aid/attendant expenses when a criterion has been complied with.

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## **Public Relations**

The Executive Director is charged with the responsibility for all public relations efforts of the PVACF. It is the responsibility of every officer, director, program director, and employee to ensure the good name of PVACF. In that regard, all who represent the Chapter in any media event shall use precaution when stating the position of PVACF in any matter. Generally, Chapter employees other than the Executive Director shall not participate in media events. When contacted by the media, the person taking the call shall notify the President/Executive Director.

## **Annual Membership Meeting**

The PVACF Annual Membership Meeting will be held in August of each year. Annually, in September, the Chapter will install the new members of the Board of Directors from the August election. The purpose of the event is to provide an Annual Chapter social gathering which allows an excellent setting for the installation of newly elected officers.

All Chapter events shall be held in a wheelchair accessible location. The Board of Directors should recommend new locations after inspecting the facilities for the specific needs of the event. Parking availability and distance should be as prime factor in these recommendations.

The Chapter should ensure that there is no cost to our members, their invited guest and any invited nonmembers the Chapter sees fit to extend an invitation to.

The Chapter's representatives should seek to find the best place possible while maintaining the budget limitation for each event.

## **Publicity and Invitations**

The membership is informed through word-of-mouth, the Chapter newsletter, Face Book, Web Page and flyers, by either mail or electronic communication to all members, regardless of their activity status.

Aside from PVACF members and other active volunteers, it is suggested that several individual invitations be sent to persons of importance to the mission of the chapter.

## **Awards**

Any awards to be presented will be determined by the Chapter leadership. The President may also have some special awards that he or she will want to present. It is important that the recipients be named sufficiently ahead of time to allow for proper preparation.



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## **Occupancy**

The rental or lease of any property to provide space for PVACF programs shall be approved in advance by the Board of Directors. In determining the adequacy of any such rental space, wheelchair accessibility to and from the property, as well as internal accessibility shall be the prevailing consideration. Aside from that, most obvious consideration will be whether the property provides adequate space to house the needs of the Chapter. Such adequacy shall include office space and workspace to satisfy the needs for the particular program(s). Adequate parking for the number of paralyzed members who work at the facility must also be considered.

Upon approval of the Board of Directors, the Chapter may purchase property which is adequate to house chapter programs. Any such decision shall be made only after prudent and responsible investigation of the property and the lending institution, with an eye to the future ability of the Chapter to maintain a long-term mortgage. Such approval of any particular facility shall require a two-thirds vote of the board.

## **External Reports**

There are certain periodic reports required of each Chapter by National PVA. The President and the Executive Director shall be familiar with those requirements and shall insure that all reports are submitted by the report deadlines. Any request for extension of time in submitting those reports shall be only upon approval of the Board of Directors.

## **Chapter Library**

The Chapter library may consist of a variety of media, including printed materials, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, slides, and any other which might be considered to be reference material. The library shall be maintained inside the Chapter office spaces and may have limited accessibility.

Any library and reference materials removed from the office shall be checked out, except when officers and/or program directors are using the materials in the performance of their duties

Any person who checks out Chapter reference and library materials shall be held accountable for that material. If lost or destroyed the individual who was responsible for the materials shall be required to reimburse the Chapter for the monetary value of those materials.

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## **PVA Business Travel Accident Insurance**

PVA requires all Chapter volunteers to be registered as a volunteer and to have PVA Business Travel Accident Insurance.

All PVACF Chapter representatives traveling on Chapter business who are bringing along a second party MUST ensure that that party is a registered volunteer for PVACF with current PVA Business Travel Accident Insurance.