



Virginia Wounded Warrior Program: Addressing the Needs of Military/Veteran Families



Battlefield



Homefront

**Cathy Wilson, Executive Director
Virginia Wounded Warrior Program
Virginia Department of Veterans Services
May 21, 2013**



VETERANS IN VIRGINIA

- **Virginia has approximately 837,051 veterans**
- **1 in every 10 citizens is a veteran, 1 in 5 in Hampton Roads**
- **By 2016 Virginia is projected to have the 4th largest veteran population in the nation**
- **Virginia ranks seventh among the states in total veteran population and fourth in younger veterans (age 20 – 49)**
- **Virginia has the largest percentage of women veterans**
- **VDOE: nearly 80,000 students in Virginia have military ties**
- **Governor's goal is to become the most veteran-friendly state**



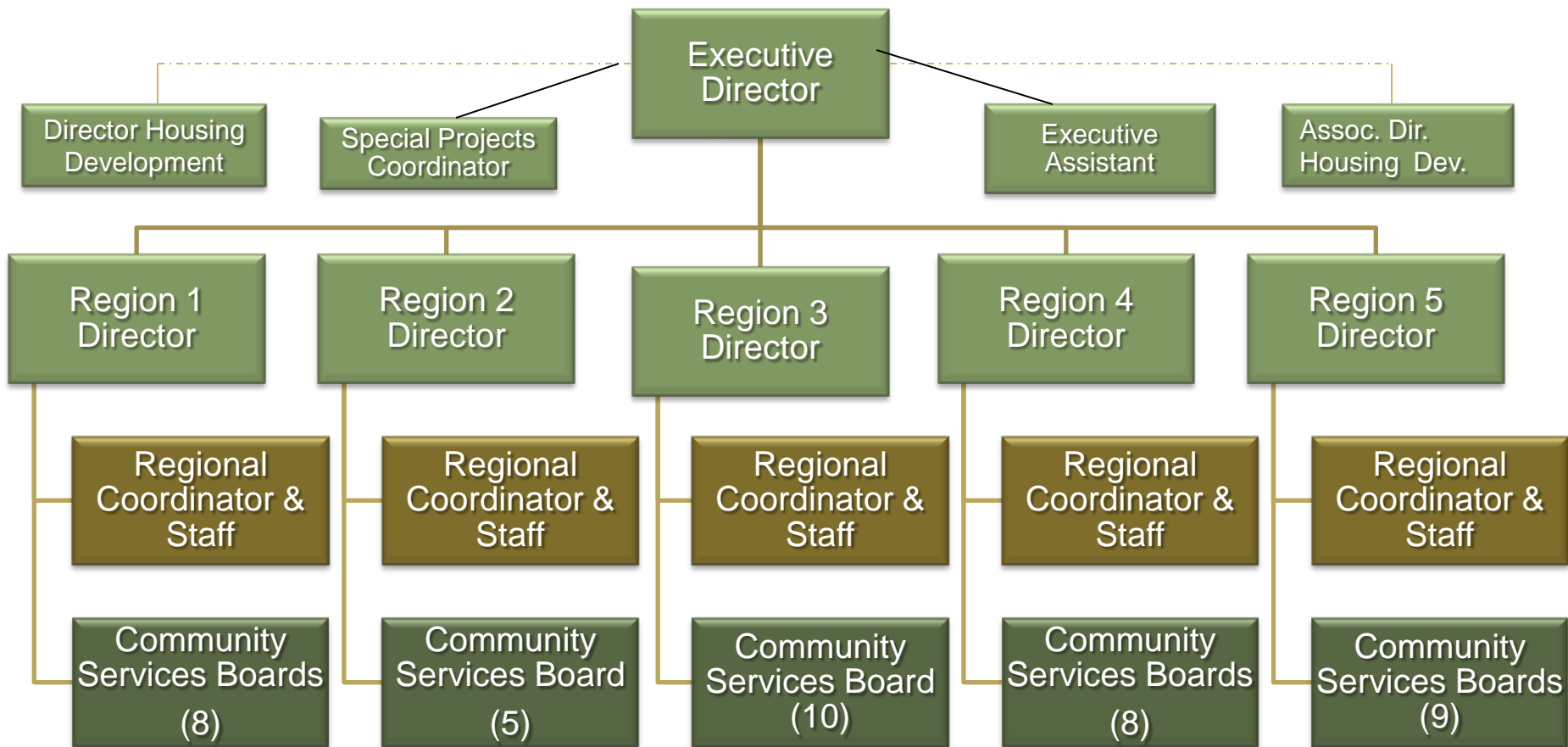
Virginia Wounded Warrior Program

MISSION

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP), in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, **monitors and coordinates behavioral health and rehabilitative services and support through an integrated, comprehensive and responsive system of public and private partnerships.** VWWP facilitates these services for Virginia veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves (not in active federal service), and their families especially those affected by **stress related conditions or traumatic brain injuries** resulting from military service.

*Safety net provider for ALL
Virginia Veterans*

VIRGINIA WOUNDED WARRIOR PROGRAM



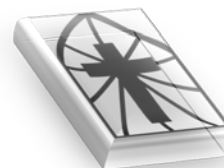
Community Providers



Veteran Services Organizations



VA Medical Centers



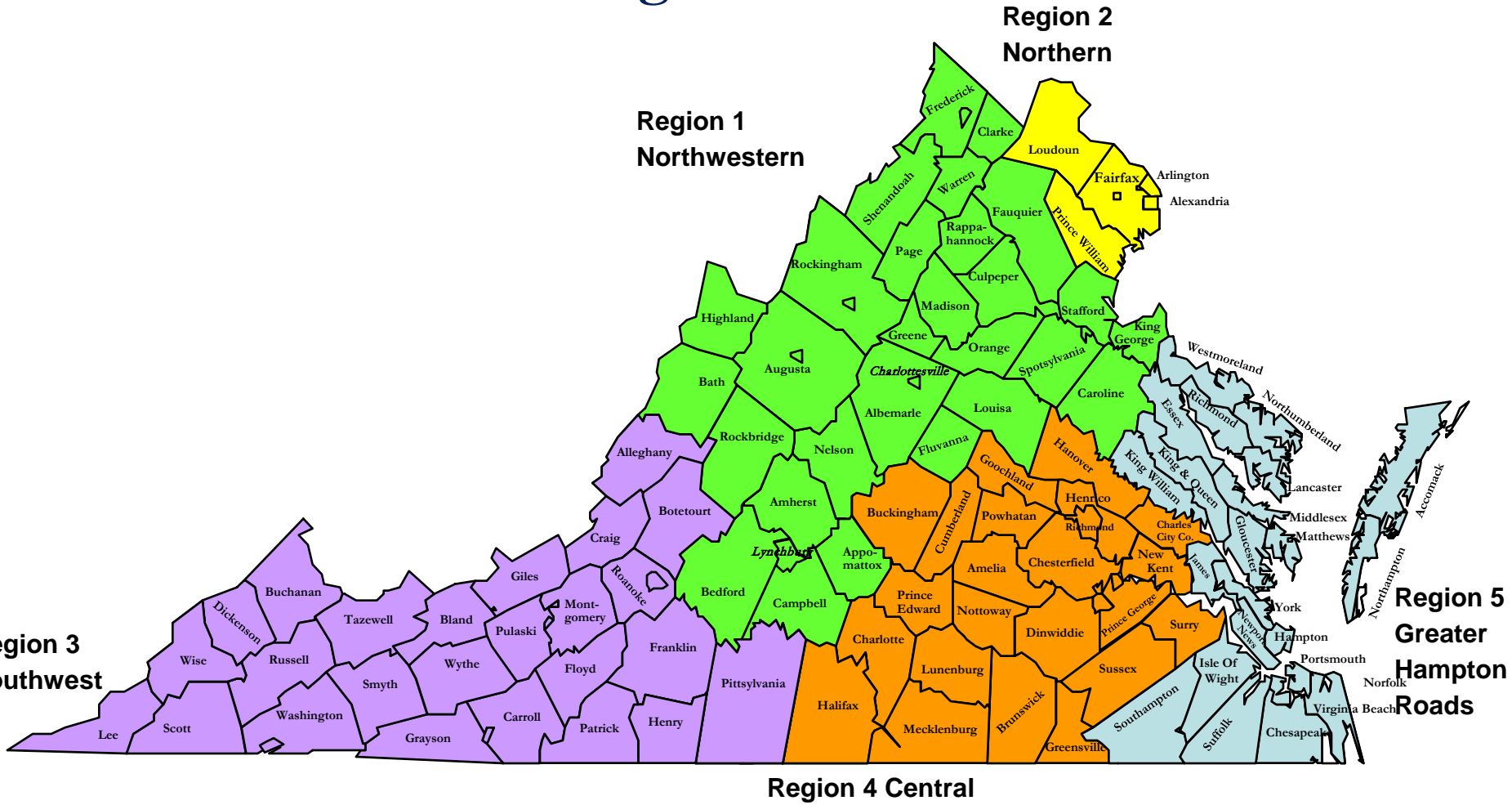
Faith Based Community





VIRGINIA WOUNDED WARRIOR PROGRAM

Regional Consortia



Statewide toll free number: 1-877-285-1299



INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION A SYSTEMS APPROACH

- **Program grounded in the Code of Virginia**
- **State funded; augmented with grants and donations**
- **Reinforced by Executive Order 29**
- **Inter-Secretariat Letter of Support**
- **Interagency Executive Strategy Committee**
- **Interagency Advisory Council**
- **Strategic Plan in Place (VWWP Comprehensive needs assessment from 2010, update planned)**

INTERAGENCY EXECUTIVE STRATEGY COMMITTEE





WHAT WE DO

- **Comprehensive Assessment of Individual and Family Needs**
- **Case Management/Care Coordination**
- **Veteran Peer Specialists/Resource/Family Support/Reentry Specialists**
- **Marriage and Family Support**
- **Peer Support and Family Support Groups**
- **Outreach and Community Education**
- **Linkage to VA Benefits, Financial Assistance, Employment and Education Programs**
- **Homeless and Housing Services**



VWWP's FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

- **Family Resource Specialists that provide case management and support to family members**
 - Family Support Groups
 - Family of Heroes online training (communication skills and help seeking for PTSD/TBI)

- **Resilience-Focused Retreats for Military/Veteran Couples and Families (focus on post-deployment concerns)**
 - Spotlight on Mission: Healthy Families Retreat, our April event was featured in the Richmond Times Dispatch!

- **Service Provider Education and Training**
 - Community briefings/events on family support
 - ASIST Suicide Intervention Workshops



SETTING THE STAGE: Family Support & Housing Stability

- **Military service/combat may place enormous strain on the family unit: lengthy separations, frequent moves, increased familial responsibilities/stress on the military spouse/children**
- **The divorce rate among enlisted female soldiers is triple that of their male counterparts which is at 9.4%**
- **OIF/OEF Veterans experience high rates of PTSD/TBI (as high as 30% among returning service members)**
 - ***How do family stressors contribute to housing instability, and how can we support our military and Veteran families?***



SETTING THE STAGE: Family Support & Housing Stability

- **War winding down/military downsizing will result in an influx of veterans and their families seeking employment in an already weak job market**
- **After Vietnam, it often took 9-12 years for Veterans' situations to deteriorate to the point of homelessness, reports suggest that OIF/OEF veterans are seeking VA homeless services more quickly**
 - ***What are the contributing factors for homelessness among veterans?***
 - ***Are OIF/OEF veterans more likely to be homeless than veterans of other service eras?***
 - ***What are effective services for homeless veterans and their families?***