



# BY-LAWS OF THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF COOK COUNTY

## ARTICLE I

### COMMISSION NAME

**SECTION 1.1.** The official name of this organization shall be the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County. Hereinafter, referred to as the “VACCC”.

**SECTION 1.2.** This commission, the VACCC has been established under the *Illinois Military Veterans Assistance Act (MVAA), 330 ILCS 45*, as may be amended from time to time, from hereinafter referred to as “*The Act*”, and any other applicable statutes, currently in place or that may come into being.

## ARTICLE II

### PURPOSE

**SECTION 2.1.** The purpose of the VACCC is to promote the welfare of the Veterans of the Uniformed Armed Services of the United States of America, whose final discharge is Honorable or General Under Honorable Conditions, by providing the just and necessary assistance and services to those Veterans, their families, and the families of deceased Veterans.

## ARTICLE III

### JURISDICTION

**SECTION 3.1.** The territory to be included within the jurisdiction of the VACCC shall be the geographical limits of the County of Cook in the State of Illinois.

## ARTICLE IV

### OFFICE

**SECTION 4.1.** The principal office of the VACCC shall be located in a Cook County building or other suitable central location. The current address is *1100 S. Hamilton Ave. (Lower Level) C- 011 Chicago, IL. 60612, which is the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center Building.*

# **ARTICLE V**

## **MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS**

**SECTION 5.1.** The Membership of the VACCC shall be composed of, and limited to, one Delegate and one Alternate from each eligible Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), whose mailing address is located in Cook County, or where twenty-five percent (**25%**) or more of the Veteran Service Organizations' membership are residents of Cook County, but the location / mailing address is outside of Cook County, as defined in The Act.

**SECTION 5.2.** The VACCC shall publish a notice to each known and eligible Veteran Service Organization, as defined as being a Congressionally Chartered or State Chartered by the Office of the Illinois Attorney General, by **January 1st** of each new calendar year.

**SECTION 5.3.** Each Veteran Service Organization shall submit their organization's membership application designating their organization's Delegate and Alternate, and provide supporting documents as required, **by March 1st** of the same calendar year, as required by The Act. Each applicant Organization will be properly vetted, and their membership term will commence at the **first meeting in March** and conclude in twelve months, on the last day of February. The Executive Board will be responsible for maintaining a listing of all participating Veteran Service Organizations (VACCC Members) and their respective Delegate and Alternate, hereinafter referred to as the **"Roster"**.

**SECTION 5.4.** A Veteran Service Organization may replace their Delegate or Alternate at any time during their term, as long as he or she does so in writing and provides the proper documentation. That replacement's term will end on the same term date as the original representative's date.

**SECTION 5.5.** No Delegate or Alternate shall be permitted to represent, or vote on behalf of, more than one Veteran Service Organization at any given meeting and proxy voting will not be permitted for any vote. The Alternate will only vote in cases where the Delegate is absent.

### **SECTION 5.6. Meetings**

- A.** VACCC Regular Membership Meeting will be held at least once per quarter, typically in March, June, September and December. Additional Membership Meetings will be held as required and determined by the Executive Board. All Regular Meetings will be held on the Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 7PM at a location to be determined. Attendance at all meetings will be allowed via electronic means.
- B.** An Annual Meeting will be held in lieu of the March Regular Membership Meeting.
- C.** All Notices will be given, and meetings will be conducted, in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.
- D.** A Special Meeting may be held called by the President when required, provided prior notice is given and requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act are met.
- E.** Quorum - Minimum number of Member Organizations present required for a meeting: Fifty Percent Plus One (**50% + 1**).

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**SECTION 6.1.** The Executive Board, hereinafter referred to as “The Board”, will consist of Seven Voting Members, who will be elected by the full VACCC membership. Those Seven members shall be the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Three At Large Board Members who hold no title other than At Large Executive Board Member. The President shall appoint at his or her discretion, other members to non-voting positions. Those positions include Judge Advocate, Sergeant at Arms, Chaplain, and Secretary.

**SECTION 6.2.** Quorum - Minimum number of Voting Board Members required for a meeting of The Board: Five (5)

**SECTION 6.3.** The Board will hold meetings a minimum of four (4) times per fiscal year, typically during the months of February, May, August, and November. The Board may participate in person or via electronic means. Dates and time to be determined. The Board shall declare a VACANCY if any Board Member misses three consecutive Board and/or Regular VACCC Meetings in one year.

**SECTION 6.4.** A Special Meeting may be held called by the President when required provided prior notice is given and requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act are met.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **THE EXECUTIVE BOARD NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

**SECTION 7.1.** At the Annual Meeting in March, VACCC Officers shall be nominated and elected for a term of one year. The term will begin upon election in March and end on the election of the following years Officers at the Annual Meeting. Delegates and/or Alternates may nominate eligible candidates, who must also be a Delegate or Alternate, from the floor.

**SECTION 7.2.** Officers may serve more than one consecutive term.

**SECTION 7.3.** The President shall call for a special election, as part of a regular meeting or special meeting, when necessary.

**SECTION 7.4.** The Superintendent and all employees of the VACCC Office are not eligible to serve as elected officers, appointed officers, delegates, alternates or have any voting rights in the VACCC.

**SECTION 7.5.** The President of the VACCC shall be the Chief Executive Officer who oversees all affairs of the VACCC. The President, who is an elected officer of The Board, shall be nominated by duly accredited Delegates or Alternates of the VACCC that are present at the Annual Meeting. His/her election and term in office shall be determined by majority vote. His/her installation and term shall commence the day of the election and shall continue for one (1) year.

**SECTION 7.6.** The First (1st) Vice President of the VACCC shall assist the President, and in the event, that the President is absent or unable to perform his/her duties, the First Vice President shall stand in as Interim President. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the First Vice President and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President. The First Vice

President, who is an elected officer of The Board, shall be nominated by duly accredited Delegates or Alternates of the VACCC that are present at the Annual Meeting. His/her election and term in office shall be determined by majority vote. His/her installation and term shall commence the day of the election and shall continue for one (1) year.

**SECTION 7.7.** The Second (2nd) Vice President of the VACCC shall be responsible for vetting organization applicants for membership. He/she shall also assist the President and First Vice President as needed. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Second Vice President and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President. The Second Vice President, who is an elected officer of The Board, shall be nominated by duly accredited Delegates or Alternates of the VACCC that are present at the Annual Meeting. His/her election and term in office shall be determined by majority vote. His/her installation and term shall commence the day of the election and shall continue for one (1) year.

**SECTION 7.8.** The Treasurer of the VACCC shall act as the Officer in charge of receiving and maintaining all monetary funds and financial record keeping of the VACCC. He/she shall submit a written financial report to the VACCC at each regular meeting. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President. The Treasurer, who is an elected officer of The Board, shall be nominated by duly accredited Delegates or Alternates of the Commission that are present at the Annual Meeting. His/her election and term in office shall be determined by majority vote. His/her installation and term shall commence the day of the election and shall continue for one (1) year.

**SECTION 7.9.** The Judge Advocate of the VACCC shall act as the advisor pertaining to legal affairs of the VACCC with his/her primary focus on The Act. The Judge Advocate shall act as the Parliamentarian and assure that all Executive Board and monthly meetings are in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order and shall advise the VACCC on correct interpretation of the VACCC By-Laws. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Judge Advocate and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President. The Judge Advocate shall be appointed by the President and shall have no voting rights in matters that come before The Board.

**SECTION 7.10.** The Sergeant-At-Arms of the VACCC shall act as the ambassador of the VACCC. He/she shall maintain order and enforce standards for professional conduct and bearing during the Regular Membership and Executive Board meetings. He/she shall also be responsible for the posting and retirement of the colors and their proper care. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Sergeant At-Arms and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President. The Sergeant-At-Arms, shall be appointed by the President and shall have no voting rights in matters that come before The Board.

**SECTION 7.11.** The Chaplain of the VACCC shall act as an advisor and consultant to the President in all matters relating to religion and/or moral conduct. He/she will assist with the integration of principles and moral conduct and encourage the VACCC to celebrate the diversity amongst its members and their individual faiths. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Chaplain and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President. The Chaplain, shall be appointed by the President and shall have no voting rights in matters that come before The Board.

**SECTION 7.12.** The Secretary of the VACCC shall act as an advisor to the President in all matters relating to regulations, submissions, record retention, and all meetings written or digitally recorded of the Board and Membership Meetings. He/she shall perform all duties related to the office Secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by the President. The Secretary, shall be appointed by the President and shall have no voting rights in matters that come before The Board.

**SECTION 7.13.** Additional terms of service to the VACCC can be served by all appointees, if reappointed by the President.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **COMMITTEES**

**SECTION 8.1.** The President shall with the consent of the Executive Board appoint such Committees as shall be deemed advisable to carry out the purpose of the VACCC.

**SECTION 8.2.** Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs must be Delegates or Alternates. The Committees shall at minimum consist of a Chair and a Secretary.

**SECTION 8.3.** The Committee Chair shall be responsible for establishing the agenda, and information pertaining to all meetings of that Committee. The Chair shall establish the time and location of each meeting, establishing the agenda, and ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

**SECTION 8.4.** The Committee Secretary shall be responsible for recordings of all meetings, written or digitally recorded, of the Committee.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

**SECTION 9.1.** The Executive powers of the VACCC shall be vested in the Superintendent, who shall be selected and recommended by the Executive Board to the full VACCC and shall be elected by at least a majority (50% + 1) of the full VACCC Member Organizations and shall take office on the date designated by The Board.

**SECTION 9.2.** The Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission has the sole authority to appoint Veteran Service Officers, assistants, and other employees as needed to carry out the mission of the VACCC.

**SECTION 9.3.** The Office of the Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission shall be under the direction of the duly elected Superintendent, who shall investigate and report to the Veterans Assistance Commission all claims for relief under the law, and shall be responsible for the daily operations of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County.

**SECTION 9.4.** The mission of the office shall be to provide service and assistance to the military veterans and their families and families of deceased veterans who are in need of assistance, and for rendering of such other services as may be considered reasonable for carrying out the purposes of the VACCC.

**SECTION 9.5.** The term of office of the Superintendent shall be indefinite but shall be evaluated yearly prior to the end of the Fiscal Year and shall come before the Executive Board and Commission for reappointment every three (3) years. The Superintendent may be removed from office if, after investigations of a special committee, determines that he/she has not adequately fulfilled the duties and obligations of the office or if it is determined his/her demeanor is such as to hinder the ethical and professional performance of the office. The investigative committee, consisting of five (5) delegates or alternates, shall be elected after a written appeal to the Board has been made by the delegates of no less than three (3) member organizations. The VACCC must approve the removal of the Superintendent by a Two Thirds (2/3) vote of the authorized membership attending such regular meeting.

**SECTION 9.6.** In the event of the resignation of the Superintendent, he/she must provide the VACCC with a formal written notice ninety (90) days prior to the date of his/her resignation.

**SECTION 9.7.** Vacancy in the Superintendent's office due to death, retirement, or discharge, shall be temporarily filled by the Assistant Superintendent until such time as the VACCC has selected a new Superintendent. During the temporary absence of the Superintendent due to illness, vacation, or business travel, the duties of the Superintendent shall be administered by the Assistant Superintendent.

**SECTION 9.8.** The Superintendent cannot have other employment that conflicts with the performance of his/her duties as the Superintendent. The said conflict will be determined by the VACCC.

**SECTION 9.9.** The Superintendent and all voting members of the Executive Board shall be bonded in an amount prescribed by The Act.

**SECTION 9.10.** The Superintendent shall serve as Director of the Veterans Assistance Commission, Non-For-Profit Organization and be its registered agent with the State of Illinois.

**SECTION 9.11.** The Superintendent shall not be authorized to hold elected office of this VACCC for five (5) years after his voluntary separation or retirement as Superintendent of the VACCC.

**SECTION 9.12.** The Superintendent must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran and a Resident of Cook County.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

**SECTION 10.1.** The Assistant Superintendent shall be nominated by the Superintendent, and appointed by the Executive Board, duly elected by at least a majority (50% + 1) of the full VACCC member organizations and shall take office on the date designated by the Board.

**SECTION 10.2.** The Assistant Superintendent shall report directly to the Superintendent.

**SECTION 10.3.** The Assistant Superintendent shall be the primary supervisor of staff, interns, and volunteers.

**SECTION 10.4.** The Assistant Superintendent shall manage the office, develop and submit standard operating procedures, and train staff, interns, and volunteers.

**SECTION 10.5.** The term of office of the Assistant Superintendent shall be indefinite, but shall come before the Executive Board and VACCC for review every three (3) years. The Assistant Superintendent may be removed from office if, after investigations of a special elected committee, determines that he/she has not adequately fulfilled the duties and obligations of the office or if it is determined his/her demeanor is such as to hinder the ethical and professional performance of the office. The investigative committee, consisting of five (5) delegates or alternates, shall be elected after a written appeal to the Board has been made by the delegates of no less than three (3) member organizations. The VACCC must approve the removal of the Assistant Superintendent by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the authorized membership attending such regular meeting.

**SECTION 10.6.** In the event of the resignation of the Assistant Superintendent, he/she must provide the Superintendent with a formal written notice ninety (90) days prior to the date of his/her resignation. Upon receipt of said resignation, the Superintendent will immediately inform the VACCC.

**SECTION 10.7.** Vacancy in the Assistant Superintendent's office due to death, retirement, or discharge, shall be temporarily filled at the discretion of the Superintendent until such time as the VACCC has selected a new Assistant Superintendent. During the temporary absence of the Assistant Superintendent due to illness, vacation, or business travel, the duties of the Assistant Superintendent shall be administered by an employee designated in writing by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION 11.1.** These By-Laws may be amended at any regular or special meeting by a vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the authorized membership attending such regular meeting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing; and that notice has been given to all members of the VACCC, delegates and alternates at least five days in advance of the date of the scheduled meeting.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
The Veterans Assistance Commission  
Of Cook County, Illinois**

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Robert Aricola, President

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Elizabeth Soto, Superintendent

**Adopted 30 May 2023**