

**2020 National Association of State Approving Agencies  
Summer Business Meeting  
August 24-27, 2020**

*“Embracing Change & Transformation”*



**GoToMeeting Platform Module, SAA TX Hosting  
August 24, 2020 – August 27, 2020**

*Photo from iStock by Getty Images: <https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/bald-eagle-american-flag?mediatype=photography&phrase=bald%20eagle%20american%20flag&sort=mostpopular>*

*Intentionally Left Blank*

## **NASAA President's Message**

### **Annie Walker**

When this year began in January, the United States was experiencing the highest employment rates in decades. Nearly anyone seeking a civilian job – including our veterans, transitioning service members and their family members – had an almost unlimited variety of opportunities to put their skills to work.

Thousands of veterans took advantage of their GI Bill® and other benefits to obtain education and training to add skills to their resumes to help them find the best jobs available. Education and training institutions abounded and many sought approvals from our State Approval Agencies so they could enroll these veterans and their family members who wished to use these benefits.

Virtually overnight, our world changed. The emergence of the first major pandemic since the Spanish Flu struck in 1918 changed everything within a matter of weeks. By March, a previously unknown and deadly virus that would come to be known as COVID-19 put an almost immediate halt to what appeared to be a new time of economic prosperity for all.

To prevent the spread of this nefarious disease, schools and businesses closed and all citizens were advised to stay home when possible to avoid social contact. As businesses closed, millions of Americans were laid off and the unemployment rates shot up to numbers not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Our educational and training institutions were forced to close or switch to online instruction only.

Our best thought-out plans were discarded, we were forced to face this new reality. Many of your agencies, like the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, were directed to close all offices. Employees were instructed to take their laptops home and begin full-time teleworking. Veterans enrolled in SAA-approved programs immediately began contacting your offices to find out if they could continue to receive their benefits if their education was now offered only online. Legislation had to be quickly enacted to allow these changes. NASAA and our Legislative Committee was actively involved.

We could no longer travel to schools to review and approve them. We could no longer hold in person trainings to assist our schools or provide educational briefings to our transitioning servicemembers on the installations. Within a few weeks, all of us learned to use videoconferencing apps to conduct business as virtual meetings became the norm.

Even now, as most states are relaxing the COVID-19 restrictions, it is obvious that we will not be going back to doing business as in the past. This “new normal” as it is called means many of us will continue to telework, facemasks and social distancing will be required when working with others, meetings will be limited to a small number of participants. In person conferences, with large number of participants like our 2020 NASAA Summer Conference will not be held for the foreseeable future.

While many educational institutions are beginning to reopen, there will be limits on how many persons can attend classes in person. Online instruction will continue to be the norm for many. These schools will need direction and support from our SAAs more than ever on how to remain approved.

As it appears that many businesses may not reopen due to the pandemic, unemployment is likely to stay high for the immediate future. This means more veterans, and family members will likely want to use their benefits to further their educational goals. With continued restrictions on travel and in-person meetings, NASAA will continue to work to strengthen our partnership with VA and our partners to ensure our Veterans and their family members have access to quality education and training. We are proud to announce that as a national organization and individually as SAAs, we stand ready to meet the challenge.

Now that there is an emphasis on social justice and equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, sex, and other factors, SAAs must make it clear to all approved institutions that they cannot discriminate against any student or applicant and, to remain approved, all students must be given an equal opportunity to succeed.

The theme we have adopted for our virtual conference this year is “*Embracing Change and Transformation.*” Could there be a theme that is more applicable for our time? We are truly in the midst of major changes we could never have anticipated. These changes will force us to throw away our playbooks, discard our old plans and work diligently to formulate new ones to meet the challenges ahead.

As your President and as a longtime NASAA member, I have no doubt that with the collective creativity and innovation that exists among our NASAA members we will work with our partners to develop new and effective policies that will help us to embrace change and transform with the times. I know we will create and implement new procedures to ensure that our veterans, and their families, have the educational and training opportunities they seek. Together, We Will.

Thank you and let us move forward together.

*-Annie Walker, NASAA President  
Deputy Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services*

# AGENDA



## Region VPs will schedule their perspective meetings with CELOs

East Region Meeting (CELO Invited)	Rebecca Ryan (RI)
South Region Meeting (CELO Invited)	Cleo Wallace (LA)
Central Region Meeting (CELO Invited)	Melissa Triplett (OH)
WEDT Region Meeting (CELO Invited)	Leanna DeKing (AZ)



## Monday, August 24, 2020

2:00 to 2:05 EDT	Comments by NASAA President	Annie Walker (VA) NASAA President
2:05 to 2:45 EDT	Education Services Update and Q&A	James Ruhlman, Deputy Director Program Management, VBAVACO Patrick A. Dworakowski, Ed.D., Assistant Director Oversight & Accountability, VBAVACO Thomas S. Alfonso, Assistant Director Policy & Procedures, VBAVACO

### **(NASAA Members Only)**

3:00 to 4:30 EDT	Lumina Grant - The Risk Based Survey Project NASAA Consultant <b>(NASAA Members and Guests)</b>	Joe Wescott, Ed.D. Meghan-Joy Woodall, M.Ed.
------------------	--	---



## Tuesday, August 25, 2020

2:00 to 2:15 EDT NASAA General Session 1  
Election of Officers  
Regional Officer Elections  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Michael Criscuolo (CT)  
NASAA Past-President

2:15 to 2:30 EDT Announcement of Regional Officers  
New Members Regional VPs

NASAA General Session 2  
Committee Reports  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Annie Walker (VA)  
NASAA President

2:30 to 4:55 EDT Committee Reports  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Committee Chairs

4:55 to 5:00 EDT Closing Comments Sue Jevning (TX)  
Conference Planning Vice Chair



### Wednesday, August 26, 2020

2:00 to 2:05 EDT Opening Comments  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Annie Walker (VA)  
NASAA President

2:05 to 3:55 EDT Committee Reports Continued  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Committee Chairs

4:00 to 5:00 EDT NASAA General Session 3  
Open Discussion  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Annie Walker (VA)  
NASAA President

5:00 to 5:15 EDT Awards Presentation  
**(NASAA Members Only)** Annie Walker (VA)  
NASAA President



### Thursday, August 27, 2020

2:00 to 3:30 EDT Executive Board Meeting  
**(NASAA Members Only)** President Elect

