



FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# NASAA

**Protecting and Promoting the GI Bill® for Veterans and Their Families**

National Association of State Approving Agencies for Veterans Education and Training



# PROTECTING THE GI BILL® SINCE 1947



## CONNECT WITH US

To improve and promote branding of the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) including current projects, upcoming events, as well as provide resource information to the public and our veteran beneficiary population.

### CONTENT

NASAA uses social media to highlight its materials, including programs, website updates, media topics from trusted sources, and reports. The information and views shared from outside media sources are not endorsed by the NASAA organization. The goal of sharing sites and media stories is to promote news in higher education and veterans' education/training.

### COMMUNITY

**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/NASAAVETSEducation/>

**LINKEDIN:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/natl-assoc-of-state-approving-agencies>

**INSTAGRAM:** [https://www.instagram.com/nasaa\\_vetsed/](https://www.instagram.com/nasaa_vetsed/)

**TWITTER:** [https://twitter.com/nasaa\\_vetsed](https://twitter.com/nasaa_vetsed)

**NASAA STORYTELLERS PODCAST | SPOTIFY:** [https://open.spotify.com/show/7lYzh1Cf3TOSpglGdf79A1?si=zy06i\\_v3R72rjwPszmBKoQ](https://open.spotify.com/show/7lYzh1Cf3TOSpglGdf79A1?si=zy06i_v3R72rjwPszmBKoQ)

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.nasaa-vetseducation.com/>

President

**FRANK MYERS**

Director

Office of Internal Operations and Administration

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

State Approving Agency

220 Stoneridge Drive, Suite 220

Columbia, SC 29201

(803) 856-0645

Vice President

**REBECCA RYAN**

Director

Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

State Approving Agency

560 Jefferson Blvd., Suite 200

Warwick, RI 02886

(401) 736-1164

Secretary

**JOHN MURRAY**

Management Analyst

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

State Approving Agency 128

10th Avenue, SW

Olympia, WA 98504

(360)709-4627

Treasurer

**TRAMAIN CARROLL-PAYNE**

Deputy Director of Education Programs

Department of Veterans Services

State Approving Agency

101 North 14th Street, 17th Floor

Richmond, VA 23219

(804) 248-1239

Financial Secretary

**CHRIS GARCIA**

Approvals Supervisor

Veterans Education - Texas Veterans Commission

Post Office Box 12277

Austin, TX 78711

(512) 463-0653

Judge Advocate

**ANDREW MARTIN**

Education Consultant

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

2135 Rimrock Road

Madison, WI 53708

(608) 2663731

Legislative Director

**JOSEPH W. WESCOTT II**

Legislative Liaison

North Carolina State Approving Agency

Post Office Box 13628

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

(910) 515-0696

Central Region Vice President

**EDWARD J. GODFREY, PhD**

SAA Representative

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Service Building

20 West 12th Street, 2nd Floor

St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 201-2857

East Region Vice President

**EVERETTE JACKSON, JR.**

Director

Maryland Higher Education Commission

6 N. Liberty Street, 10th Floor

Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 7673095

South Region Vice President

**LILY SNYDER**

Senior Coordinator

Georgia Department of Veterans Service

State Approving Agency

Floyd Veterans' Memorial Building, Suite E-970

Atlanta, GA 30334

(404) 656-2306

West Region Vice President

**KATHERINE SNYDER**

Director

New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services

State Approving Agency

4801 Indian School Road, NE

Albuquerque, NM 87110

(505) 280-1047



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**JAMES HENLEY | PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIAISON**

The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) is an organization comprised of the State Approving Agencies (SAAs) for each state plus several territories. There are a total of 53 SAAs. State Approving Agencies were established by Congress to work in partnership with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to ensure that education and training programs funded under the GI Bill® are of quality and represent value to veterans, their family members and dependents, and the U.S. taxpayers. This annual report summarizes the activities of NASAA in FY 2023.

President Myers' message discusses how more and more students are turning to online programs so that they can continue with their employment at the same time. He also mentions the importance of the State Approving Agencies to approve quality online programs. With the return of Supervisory Visits to State Approving Agencies, President Myers mentions the opportunity this will present to reestablish a stronger presence within the educational community. He also discusses the great partnership we have with the Department of Veterans Affairs and how, together, it will lead to greater success for all involved.

NASAA by the numbers shows another year of increased actions in most Core Functions for State Approving Agencies, including a 25% in Approval Actions. These numbers clearly show no slowing down for NASAA. Instead, we are finding ways to improve and increase our activity.

Looking Forward discusses how NASAA's involvement with legislation that effects veterans education and training is so important. State Approving Agencies oversight also helps provide the protection that our veteran students need from bad actors. A new form of this oversight, Risk Based Surveys, is also discussed.

Awards, Honors and Recognitions recognizes the NASAA members who performed outstanding service for the Association during FY 2023.

It is an honor to protect and serve our veterans and their families.  
Respectfully submitted,

James Henley, USN(Ret), MO-SAA

Public Affairs Liaison



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## NASAA & THE GI BILL

The National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) helps make the GI Bill® work. NASAA facilitates the efforts of its member State Approving Agencies in promoting and safeguarding quality education and training programs for veterans, ensuring greater education and training opportunities for veterans, and protecting the integrity of the GI Bill.

NASAA works hand-in-hand with other organizations to make the GI Bill the best possible educational assistance program for our nation's veterans. NASAA members work with government agencies, Congress, schools, and employers to ensure that veterans have access to well-managed, ethical programs they can trust to help them achieve their goals.

*GI Bill is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.*

## RETIREES

*Laura Bach of the Washington State Approving Agency retired September 30, 2023 after 19 years of service*

*Colleen Thayer of the California State Approving Agency retired April 2023 after 30+ years of service*

*Michael Dommer of the Iowa State Approving Agency retired March 20, 2023 after 12 years of service*

*Luke Suereth of the Pennsylvania State Approving Agency retired September 22, 2023 after 6 years of service*



# MESSAGE FROM THE NASAA PRESIDENT



**FRANK MYERS | NASAA PRESIDENT**

In today's world of educational ambience and platforms, there are so many choices as to how a student can elect to receive their education from an institution. As more and more students are working and living from paycheck to paycheck, as they enroll in an educational institution to obtain their collegiate credentials, receiving an online degree, diploma, or certificate may be the best avenue for them to pursue rather than attending the traditional college campus.

Educational institutions across the nation are competing for student enrollments. We've learned from past experiences that educational training institutions seeking approval and those that are approved for veterans' education and training will, in some cases, go to great

lengths in seeking veteran enrollments. As State Approving Agencies continue to approve education institutions for independent study and distance learning, we must ensure that these institutions, whether they be for-profit, nonprofit, or public, are providing true and correct quality training to our veterans and those eligible to receive VA education benefits.

With the rebirth of Supervisory Visits, State Approving Agencies will have the opportunity to schedule and conduct site visits at educational institutions to ensure they are following both federal and state approval criteria.

Moreover, State Approving Agencies will reestablish a stronger presence within the educational community to further ensure that veterans, those eligible to receive VA education benefits, and our taxpayers' dollars, are well protected from the education pirates.

Through a collaborative effort, much has been accomplished in FY23 by the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) and the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). As a result of this collaborative effort, and under the leadership of Mr. Joseph Garcia, Executive Director, Education Service Veteran Benefits Administration, VA and NASAA have revitalized our partnership. Inasmuch, for FY24, this renewed partnership with VA will lead to greater success for educational institutions, training establishments, veterans, and those eligible to receive VA education benefits.

I encourage each SAA member to exercise greater education and training opportunities that meet the changing needs of our nation's most precious commodity, our Veterans.

It has truly been an honor to serve and work with so many amazing SAA members across the nation in FY23. I would like to thank each of you for what you do for our veterans, those eligible to receive VA education benefits, and for your trust and support in allowing me, as the NASAA President, to lead you in FY24.

Sincerely,

*Frank G. Myers, Jr.*

Frank G. Myers, Jr.  
NASAA President



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

State Approving Agencies (SAAs) primarily work with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Education Service Unit. The Under Secretary for Benefits, the Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Opportunity, and the Executive Director of Education Service, make up the VA chain of command. Joseph Garcia, Executive Director of Education Service leads a dedicated staff in the VA Central Office (VACO) and the Regional Processing Offices (RPOs) to implement the full range of GI Bill® programs. Each region has a Chief Education Liaison Officer (CELO) who directs the work of the Education Liaison Representatives (ELRs) within its region's states and oversees the coordination of the work contracted to the State Approving Agencies.

## THE CHIEF EDUCATION LIAISON OFFICERS ARE:

- 1] East: Michele Mendola - Buffalo, NY
- 2] Central: Josh Martin, Acting - Lincoln, NE
- 3] South: Wayne Rhoades – Atlanta, GA
- 4] West: Tina Keeter - Muskogee, OK

## VA PARTNERS

These dedicated individuals and their staff provide VA systems training to evaluate the performance of the State Approving Agencies. They and their staff also provide VA systems training to enable SAAs to conduct risk-based surveys and to utilize Salesforce's shared online platform, E-Force, to upload Approval and Compliance information to the VA.

A positive working relationship between the State Approving Agencies and the Education Service Unit is a vital part of the delivery of educational services to eligible veterans, service persons, and dependents.



**JOSHUA JACOBS**

SENIOR ADVISOR FOR POLICY  
PERFORMING THE DELEGABLE  
DUTIES OF THE UNDER  
SECRETARY FOR BENEFITS



**THE HONORABLE DENIS  
RICHARD MCDONOUGH**

SECRETARY OF VETERANS  
AFFAIRS FOR BENEFITS



**JOSEPH GARCIA**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATION SERVICE, VETERAN  
BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION



# STAKEHOLDERS

SAAAs coordinate and collaborate with many other entities in providing services to veterans and their families.

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

American Council on Education Veterans Programs (ACE)

American Legion

AMVETS National Services Foundation

Association of Veterans Education Certifying Officials (AVECO)

Council of College and Military Educators (CCME)

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Helmets to Hardhats (H2H)

HillVets

Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

MYCAA- Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts

National Association of State Directors of Veteran Affairs (NASDVA)

National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA)

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC)

State Departments of Economic Development

State Departments of Education

State Departments of Labor

State Departments of Veterans Affairs

State Higher Education Executive Officers

State Veteran Educators Organizations

Student Veterans of America (SVA)

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

Troops to Energy

Troops to Teachers (TTT)

United Service Organizations (USO)

U.S. Department of Defense Voluntary Education

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Labor

Veterans Commission

Veterans Education Project (VEP)

Veterans Education Success (VES)

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)

Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists (WAVES)

Workforce Development

Warrior Scholar Project (WSP)Warrior Scholar Project (WSP)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*A publication of this type is never completed in isolation. The efforts of several State Approving Agencies' staff members went into the production. Many thanks to all who assisted with this project. Here are some who have contributed time and effort to the project:*

## PROJECT MANAGERS

James Henley

Lily Snyder

## EDITORS

Lisa Deneen

James Henley

Amber Mertens

John Murray

Stephen Rudnick

Shannon Patenoude

## CONTENT

Lisa Deneen

James Henley

John Murray

Karol Scheetz

Penny Starr

## DATA

Lily Snyder

## ART DIRECTOR

Leslie Neese



# CHANGES TO VETERANS' EDUCATION BENEFITS

On December 29, 2022, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (PL-117-328) was signed into law by the President of the United States. This law (in section 215) altered 38 USC 3501 such that Chapter 35 beneficiaries would no longer be able to receive their five months of free entitlement at secondary schools on or after August 1, 2026. The following section (section 216) created 38 USC 3691A, which contained requirements that could force a school to return to VA all monies paid (to include the housing allowance) on behalf of any beneficiary that withdrew from their program after receiving orders to enter a period of covered service.

On January 5, 2023, the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022 (PL-117-333) was signed into law by the President of the United States. This legislation codified the methodology used to charge educational assistance benefits, explained how entitlement periods could be extended, and provided direction for work-study payments, during emergency situations. PL-117-333 also addressed the restoration of benefits following a school closure during such emergencies. Additionally, this law also required VA to utilize a Uniform Application for the approval of new courses of education on or after October 1, 2023.

## RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION MITIGATING OPTIONS AND TECHNICAL EXTENSIONS (REMOTE) ACT (PL 117-76)

The primary goal of this legislation was to extend the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 from December 21, 2021 to June 1, 2022, allowing veterans using CH 33 benefits to continue receiving full MHA for courses converted from in-person to distance education.

The REMOTE Act continued the allowance for non-accredited schools to certify distance learning courses due to the ongoing health and safety concerns of the Coronavirus from December 21, 2021 to June 1, 2022.

Additionally, the legislation included the following amendments to address some of the concerns in FY21's Isakson & Roe Act.

- Allows the VA Secretary the ability to grant a waiver of verification of enrollment (dual enrollment) for educational institutions that use a flat tuition and fee structure that would make the use of a second verification unnecessary.
- Adds limitations on the SAA's authority to disapprove courses when schools pay for the recruitment of foreign students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal student assistance. as long as the recruitments meet the regulations and guidance of the Department of Education.
- Clarifies the "rounding out" rule for eligible veterans who are pursuing a program of education on a less than a half-time basis during their last semester, term, or academic period prior to completing the program of education. If the veteran is enrolled in, or has completed, every course offered by the program of education they can enroll in additional courses that are not required for the program and these courses can be certified in order for the beneficiary to collect benefits at the full-time rate of pursuit.

## ENSURING THE BEST SCHOOLS FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2022 (PL 117-174)

Educational institutions that meet the following requirements are exempt from submitting the 85/15 reports to the VA.

(A) The majority of courses offered by the educational institution are approved under section 3672 or 3675 of Title 38 and

(B) the total number of veterans and persons receiving assistance under Title 38 or under chapter 1606 of Title 10 who are enrolled in the school equals 35 percent or less of the total student enrollment at such institution.  
or

(i) the majority of courses offered by the educational institution are approved under section 3676 of Title 38; and

(ii) the total number of veterans and persons receiving assistance under Title 38 or chapter 1606 Title 10 who are enrolled in the school equals 35 percent or less of the total student enrollment.

However, on a case by case basis, the Secretary may require an 85/15 report if the Secretary has reason to believe that the enrollment of veterans may be in excess of 85 percent of the total student enrollment in a course of study.

The 35% exemption is done on a biennial basis to verify that the school continues meeting the requirements.

Additionally, the 85/15 reporting requirements do not apply in programs of education for which fewer than 10 students are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by the educational institution or by the Department of Veterans Affairs.



# MISSION & HISTORY

The primary responsibility of the State Approving Agencies (SAAs) is to ensure the quality and integrity of programs of education and training for the use of GI Bill® benefits. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the State Approving Agencies and their mission to serve veterans and their families.

## STATE APPROVING AGENCIES:

In many ways, the fundamental mission of State Approving Agencies is the same today as it was when they were founded over 75 years ago.

- ❖ Promote and safeguard quality education and training for veterans;
- ❖ Oversight and approval of certificate, diplomas, and degree levels of post-secondary education;
- ❖ Ensure greater educational and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of veterans
- ❖ Assist the VA in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in the administration of the GI Bill®

The scope of responsibility: high schools, adult education centers, employers providing an on-the-job training and apprenticeship training, license and certification testing, vocational training, as well as, all certificate and degree levels of post-secondary education.

Essentially, for someone to receive GI Bill benefits, an SAA has approved his or her program of study or training. Several years after the passage of the 1944 GI Bill of Rights, Congress added State Approving Agencies to the law in 1947. SAAs were the answer to the problems of abuse experienced by the new

program. Congress believed that the states' control of education and approval of programs was the best avenue to safeguard both veterans and institutions.

As state entities acting on behalf of the federal government, SAAs have been an outstanding example of the workability of the federal-state partnership, allowing federal interests to be pursued at the local level while preserving the identity, interests, and sovereignty of states' rights in education. Under Title 38, United States Code, each governor designates a state bureau or department as the State Approving Agency for the state.

Today there are 53 State Approving Agencies with 200 professional and support personnel, supervising over 10,000 active facilities and over 200,000 programs. SAAs are located in various state offices, including: state departments of education, higher education boards, state departments of labor, state departments of veterans affairs, and standalone agencies. SAA professionals bring a wealth of formal education, training, and experience to the approval of programs for veterans benefits.



*East Region NASAA Members in Stowe, Vermont*



# NASAA

In 1948, the State Approving Agencies (SAAs) saw a need to coordinate their efforts nationwide and gathered to form the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA). NASAA works hand-in-hand with other organizations to make the GI Bill® the best possible educational assistance program for our nation's veterans. NASAA members work with government agencies, Congress, schools, and employers to assure that veterans have access to well-managed, ethical programs they can trust to help them achieve their goals. This relationship has been a critical component in the successful administration of the GI Bill.

With the formation of NASAA, the SAAs began to create professional standards for themselves. The organization established a forum for the exchange of ideas, the promotion of high professional standards, policies, and ethical practices among its members, and representation on mutual interests or issues coming before the membership. The organization continues to work to develop and maintain uniform standards for all SAAs. NASAA encourages, supports, and fosters the collaboration of all agencies concerned with the administration of education and training programs for those eligible to receive VA benefits.

Committees in specific areas, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs), Apprenticeship/ On-the-Job-Training (APP/ OJT), Flight Schools, Contracting, etc., have been created to focus on particular areas of approval and supervision in order to create more effective and efficient processes for the SAAs.

The organization works to ensure that the greatest number of quality programs are available to those eligible for education and training benefits. Through the efforts of the SAAs and NASAA, states are better able to serve those who are eligible to receive veterans' education and training assistance benefits.

## **NASAA TESTIFIES BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

On September 20, 2023, the NASAA Legislative Director, Dr. Joseph W. Wescott II, accompanied by the NASAA President, Frank Myers, testified before the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Committee on Veterans' Affairs United States House of Representatives on the subject of "Less is More: The Impact of Bureaucratic Red Tape on Veterans Education Benefits." Included among the many points discussed by NASAA were the past and present role of the State Approving Agencies, NASAA's recently improved partnership with VA, difficulties experienced by the facilities as well as NASAA during the initial rollout of Risk-Based Surveys, unnecessary red tape and bureaucratic overreach, and NASAA's hope for a real partnership with VA and a renewed focus on veteran success. In addition to the testimony offered by NASAA, Joseph Garcia, Director of Education Services, Dr. Jan Del Signore, President of the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators, Joe Rasmussen, Veteran Services Director with the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Anne H. Meehan, Assistant Vice President of Government Relations with the American Council on Education, and William Hubbard, Vice President for Veterans & Military Policy at Veterans Education Success, also testified before the subcommittee.

It should be noted that, shortly after the hearing on September 20, 2023, the VA began discussing a mid-year reduction in the number of Risk-Based Surveys that they had assigned to the State Approving Agencies for Fiscal Year 2024.



*NASAA Members & VA Partners in Stowe, Vermont*



# NASAA WORKS IN COOPERATION WITH ITS PARTNERS

NASAA members work closely with the VA to resolve concerns over regulations and frequently appear before Congress to testify on veterans' education issues.

NASAA also works with our partners in education, such as the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA) and student groups, such as Student Veterans of America.

December 21, 2021 saw the passing of the Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions (REMOTE) Act (PL-177-76). The Act extended the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 from December 1, 2021 to June 1, 2022.

Highlights include:

- ❖ Veterans using CH 33 benefits to continued receiving full MHA for courses converted from in-person to distance education.
- ❖ Continued the allowance for non-accredited schools to certify distance learning courses due to the ongoing health and safety concerns of the Coronavirus.
- ❖ Adds limitations on the SAA's authority to disapprove courses when schools pay for the

recruitment of foreign students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal student assistance.

August 26, 2022 saw the passing of the Ensuring the Best Schools for Veterans Act of 2022 (PL-117-174). The act amends the 85/15 reporting requirements in the following ways:

- ❖ Institutions that are approved under section 3672, 3675, or 3676 of Title 38 and the total number of veteran beneficiaries enrolled in the school equals 35 percent or less of the total student enrollment at such institution.
- ❖ Additionally, the 85/15 reporting requirements do not apply in programs of education for which fewer than 10 students are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by the educational institution or by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- ❖ The 35% exemption is done on a biennial basis to verify that the school continues meeting the requirements.



*NASAA Executive Board in Washington DC*



# CORE FUNCTIONS

## TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION, WE ENGAGE IN SIX CORE FUNCTIONS:

### **APPROVAL OF PROGRAMS:**

Review, evaluate, and approve quality programs of education (secondary & postsecondary, public and private) and training utilizing pre-established state and federal criteria. Programs leading to a standard college degree at an accredited public or non-profit institution of higher learning are “deemed approved” in accordance with PL 111-377 and PL 114-315.

### **RISK BASED SURVEYS VISITS TO SCHOOLS AND TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS:**

Conduct on-site visits to approved educational institutions, training establishments, and flight schools to assess various legislative and Department determined risk factors, as well as, continued compliance with appropriate state and federal laws and VA regulations. The on-site visit is a holistic review consisting of reviews of policies and practices of the institution, to include equipment, instructional staff, and administrators, along with a detailed review of a random sampling of the veteran student files, which includes reviewing transcripts of grades, records of previous education, granting of appropriate credit, other relevant records, and VA payments under the Post 9/11 GI Bill®.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

Directly assist facility officials or businesses with any aspect of the approval process, veteran student certification process, and clarification of statute or policy changes.

### **OUTREACH:**

Promote the increased usage of GI Bill benefits through briefings and presentations, mass media marketing, and networking with a wide variety of stakeholders, to include providers of education and training, employers, military installations, and veterans groups.

### **LIAISON:**

Collaborate with government, veteran, and educational entities to resolve issues, identify and formulate training needs, share best practices, and identify opportunities for success.

### **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT COMPLIANCE:**

Fulfill all VA cooperative requirements on time and on target. These requirements include submission of reimbursement invoices and quarterly activity reports and completing annual security and privacy training requirements.



*Central Region NASAA Members in Stowe, Vermont*



# NASAA 2022-23

## EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

The Officers of the Association are elected by the Association Membership or appointed by the President of the Association. Officers manage and administer the affairs of the Association through the Executive Board and the Committee system. The Association, through Association Membership, votes on rulings or rules at the Annual and Mid-Winter Business and Training meetings and has full and complete authority over the officers and committee members.

The Officers of the Association shall perform duties as generally defined in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised and as specifically defined in the articles of the Constitution and the Bylaws.

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Frank Myers (SC)	President	Ed Godfrey (MN)	Central Region Vice President
Rebecca Ryan (RI)	Vice President	Everette Jackson (MD)	East Region Vice President
John Murray (WA)	Secretary	Lily Snyder (GA)	South Region Vice President
Tramaine Carroll-Payne (VA)	Treasurer	Katherine Snyder (NM)	Western Region Vice President
Chris Garcia (TX)	Financial Secretary	Chris Kratochvil (ND)	Central Region Alternate
Everette Jackson (MD)	Judge Advocate	Emily Butler (PA)	East Region Alternate
James Henley (MO)	Public Affairs Liaison	Torrence Joseph (LA)	South Region Alternate
Joseph Wescott (NC)	Legislative Director	Cheryl Iannello (CA)	West Region Alternate

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS COMMITTEE

Apprenticeship and OJT Committee  
Archives and History  
Audit Committee  
Automation & Technology Committee  
Communications Committee  
Conference Planning Committee  
  
Constitution & Bylaws Committee  
Contract/Cooperative Agreement Committee  
Flight Training Committee  
Honors, Awards, Membership & Alumni Committee  
IHL & NCD Committee  
Legislative Committee  
Military Transition Assistance Committee  
Past President's Council / Nominating Committee  
Professional Development Committee

### CHAIR

Tara Monk (TX)  
Lisa Deneen (OR)  
James Henley (MO)  
Melissa Triplett (OH)  
Lily Snyder (GA)  
Rebecca Ryan (RI)  
  
Andrew Martin (WI)  
Stephen Rudnick (OK)  
Deb O'Neil (WA)  
Judy Schuler (TX)  
David Salgado (TX)  
Joseph Wescott (NC)  
Torrence Joseph (LA)  
Mike Criscuolo (CT)  
Gwen Hacker (KY)

### VICE-CHAIR

Torrence Joseph (LA)  
Paula Plum (MN)  
Cheryl Iannello (CA)  
Judy Schuler (TX)  
Shannon Patenoude (ID)  
Ryan Rishling (NV)  
& Judy Schuler (TX)  
Samantha Erikson (OH)  
Shane Ferrebee (CA)  
Rich Charron (CA)  
Andy Pieper (IL)  
Rachael Summary (MO)  
Dan Wellman (IL)  
Ken Hanson (TN)  
  
Bill Schroeder (OH)





# NASAA BY THE NUMBERS

This data was taken from NASAA aggregated quarterly reports for all SAAs. Selected for inclusion are program approvals, other approval actions, Risk-Based Surveys, other visit activity, technical assistance, outreach, and liaison actions.

FY2023 brought a 25% increase in Approval Actions from FY2022. Most other Core Functions had increased activity for FY2023.

Total approval actions number 379,563 when including the 22,033 disapproval actions reported in FY 2023. Total reported actions for all core functions equal 489,585 for FY 2023.

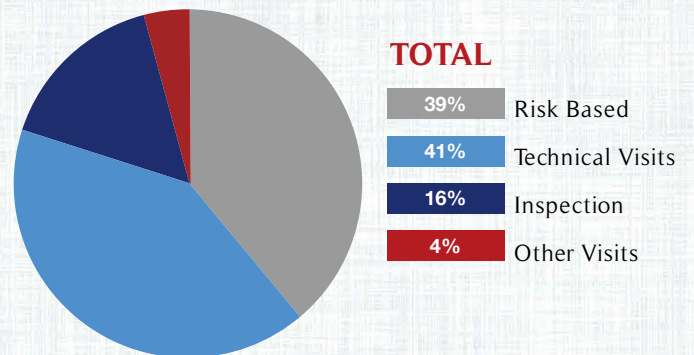
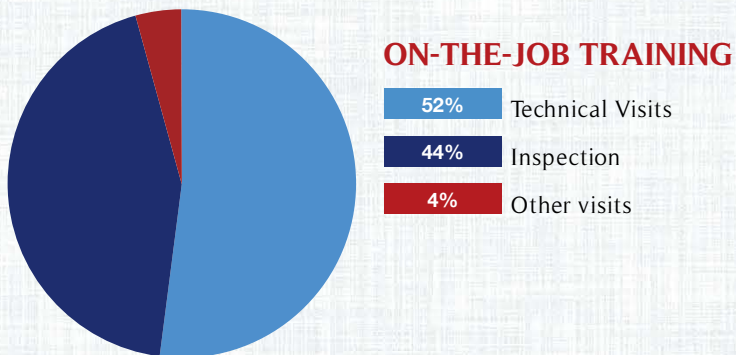
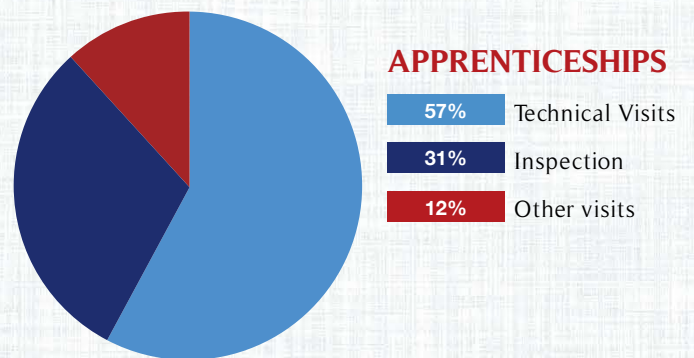
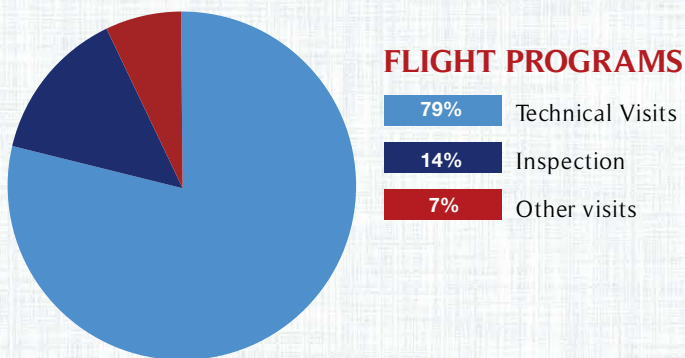
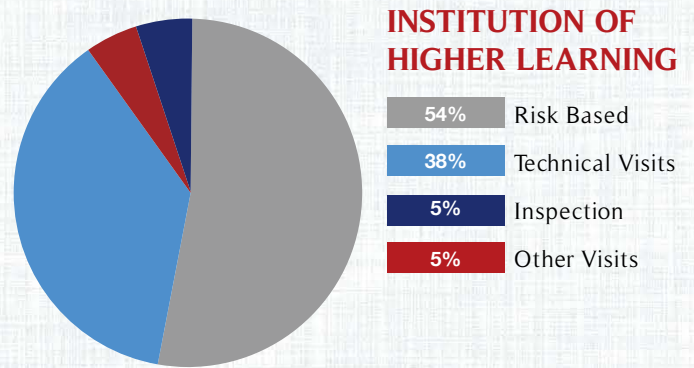
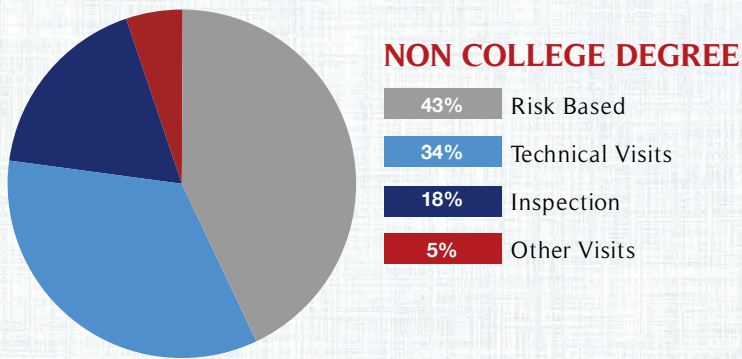
YEAR	TYPE OF FACILITY	IHL	NCD	APP	OJT	CORR	FLT	LIC/CERT
2023	Technical Assistance Actions	40,038	28,036	5,713	6,458	47	1,716	315
2022	Technical Assistance Actions	46,038	29,897	4,575	6,829	37	2,101	223
2021	Technical Assistance Actions	44,560	24,947	5,177	5,954	119	2,244	223
2020	Technical Assistance Actions	26,022	18,150	4,862	5,961	13	1,318	288

Technical assistance is any interaction designed to assist an individual, a school, or training site personnel with any portion of the approval function. Assistance could be rendered either before or after initial approval.

*Source: FY2020-FY2023 quarterly reports  
provided to NASAA & VA by SAAs*





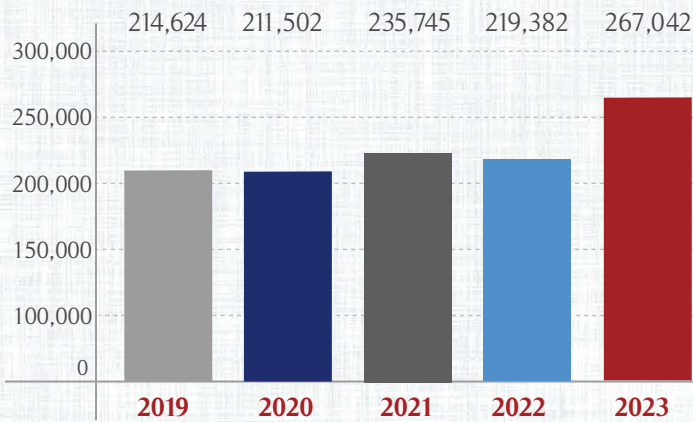


Source: FY2023 quarterly reports provided to NASAA & VA by SAAs

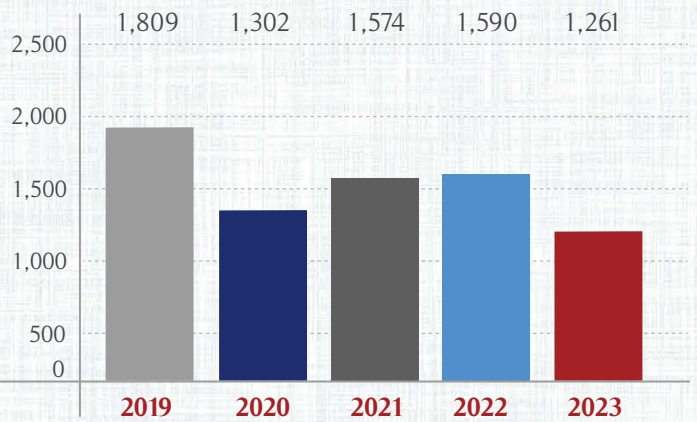


# 2019-2023 COMPARISON

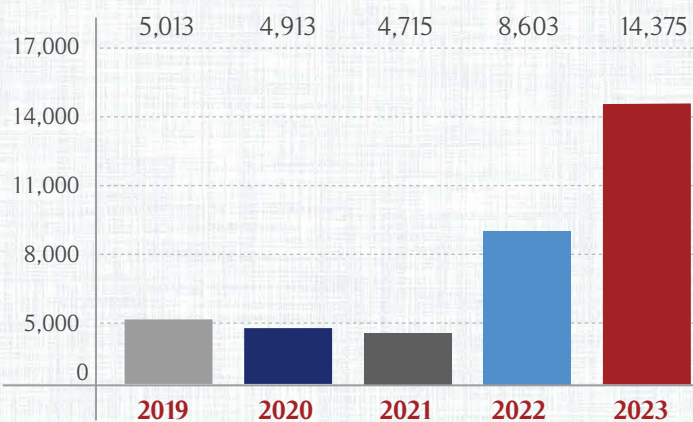
## APPROVALS



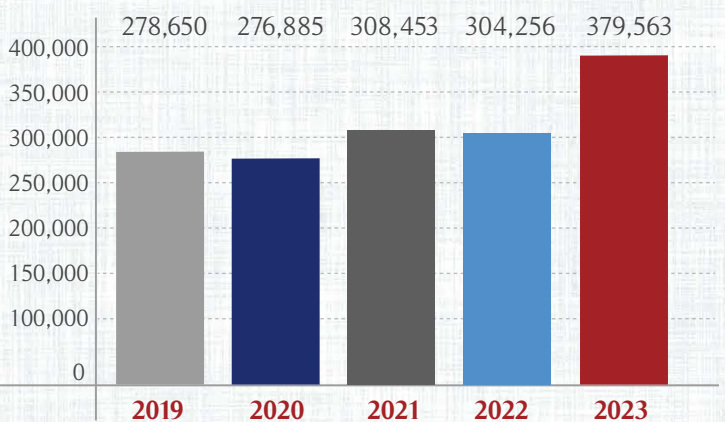
## RISK BASED SURVEYS\*



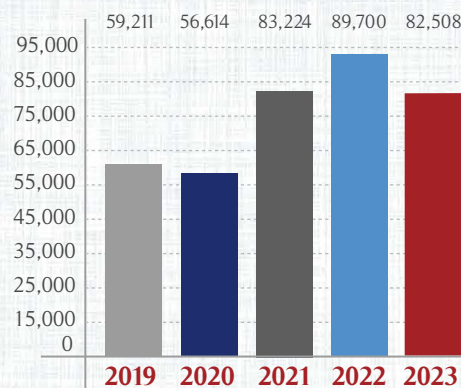
## OUTREACH



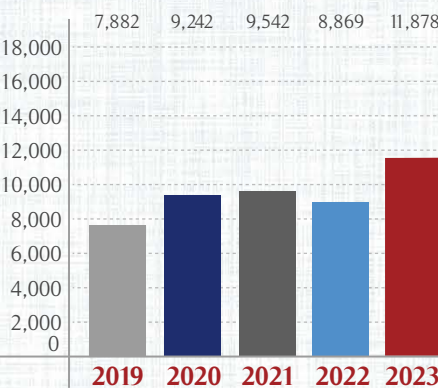
## TOTAL APPROVAL ACTIONS



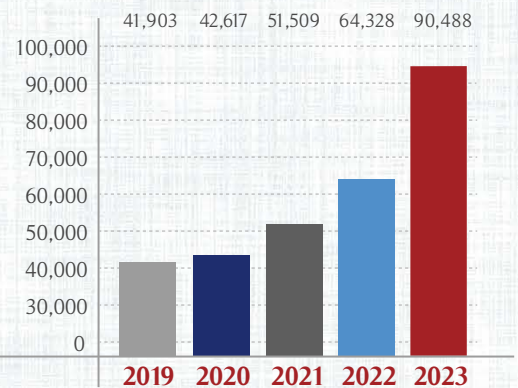
## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIONS



## LIAISON



## OTHER APPROVAL ACTIONS



\* As of FY2023, SAAs were tasked with Risk Based Surveys and no longer conducted Compliance Surveys.



# NASAA REGIONS

## WEST

Alaska  
Arizona  
California  
Colorado  
Hawaii  
Idaho  
Montana  
Nevada  
New Mexico  
Oregon  
Utah  
Washington  
Wyoming

## CENTRAL

Illinois  
Indiana  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
South Dakota  
Wisconsin

## SOUTH

Alabama  
Arkansas  
Florida  
Georgia  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Mississippi  
North Carolina  
Oklahoma  
Puerto Rico  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas  
Virginia  
West Virginia

## EAST

Connecticut  
Delaware  
District of Columbia  
Maine  
Maryland  
Massachusetts  
Michigan  
New Hampshire  
New Jersey  
New York  
Ohio  
Pennsylvania  
Rhode Island  
Vermont

# COMMITTEE SUMMARIES

## PERMANENT COMMITTEES

- 1| Apprenticeship and On-The-Job Training (OJT)
- 2| Contract/Cooperative Agreement
- 3| Flight
- 4| Institutions of Higher Learning & Non College Degree
- 5| Legislative
- 6| Military Transition Assistance
- 7| Professional Development

## SPECIAL COMMITTEES CONSTITUTED ANNUALLY BY THE PRESIDENT

- 1| Audit
- 2| Automation and Technology
- 3| Communications
- 4| Conference Planning
- 5| Constitution and Bylaws
- 6| Honors and Awards/Membership/Alumni
- 7| Past Presidents Council
- 8| Archives and History
- 9| Joint Peer Review Group



*NASAA President and Regional Vice Presidents at Stowe, Vermont*



# PERMANENT COMMITTEES

## **APPRENTICESHIP AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT) COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Review and make recommendation on regulatory and procedural changes affecting the approval and supervision of Apprenticeship and On-The-Job Training Programs; seek review with Executive Board
- 2] Advise the Chair of the Legislative Committee on matters which the Committee determines within the purview of this Committee
- 3] Prepare reports and recommendations for submission to the Association and the Executive Board
- 4] Conduct activities (workshops, telephone conference calls, etc.) which afford the opportunity for an open exchange of ideas concerning all aspects of Apprenticeship / On-The-Job Training

## **CONTRACT/COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Conduct general contract/Cooperative Agreement deliberations on behalf of the Association with the Department of Veterans Affairs; seek review with the Executive Board
- 2] Keep the Association informed of all modifications or changes to the contract/Cooperative Agreement; report to the Executive Board and the Association about the overall contract/Cooperative Agreement status

## **INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND NON COLLEGE DEGREE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Review and make recommendations on regulatory and procedural changes affecting the approval, survey and supervision of Institutions of Higher Learning and Non-College Degree Institutions
- 2] Advise the Chair of the Legislative Committee on matters the Committee determines are within the purview of this Committee and may affect the Association
- 3] Prepare reports and recommendations for submission to the Executive Board and Association

## **FLIGHT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Review and make recommendations on regulatory and procedural changes affecting the approval and supervision of Flight Training Programs
- 2] Advise the Chair of the Legislative Committee on matters the Committee determines are within the purview of this Committee
- 3] Prepare reports and recommendations for submission to the Executive Board and Association

## **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Develop, maintain, publish, and manage the Legislative Agenda for the Association; seek review with the Executive Board and direct approval from the Association
- 2] Secure, evaluate, and prepare recommendations on all proposed legislation pertinent to veterans' education and submit them to the President for action
- 3] Maintain liaison with appropriate Committees and Subcommittees of the Congress of the United States and their staffs
- 4] Maintain regular contact with members of the Association whose states have legislators on the Veterans Affairs Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives
- 5] Arrange for testimony at appropriate congressional committee and subcommittee hearings
- 6] Involve all members of the Association in communication with their legislators on matters of vital concern to the Association
- 7] Draft proposed legislation pertinent to State Approving Agency roles and responsibilities and submit to the President for action



## **MILITARY TRANSITION ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Monitor, review, and make recommendations on regulatory and procedural changes affecting the participation of in-service military personnel in the Educational and Training Program under Title 38 and Title 10, U.S. Code
- 2] Work with the appropriate service-related organizations regarding the participation of in-service personnel in the use of Title 38 and Title 10, U.S. Code provisions
- 3] Advise the Chair of the Legislative Committee on matters under the purview of this Committee that are deemed appropriate for inclusion in the Legislative Agenda
- 4] Advise the Executive Board and Association on matters brought to the committee for review and possible inclusion in committee actions relating to Military Education and Transition Assistance
- 5] Prepare reports and recommendations for submission to the Executive Board and the Association

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Exercise oversight for the training and education of professional State Approving Agency staff members
- 2] Advise the Executive Board and Association in matters related to professional development that may require action, impact the conduct of business, or affect the general welfare of the Association or its members
- 3] Act on the behalf of the Executive Board as directed in the development, implementation, administration, and monitoring of training and education requirements and provide oversight, along with the Regional VPs in the Mentoring of newly assigned State Directors and as requested by the State for all other members

- 4] Monitor the professional development of the members and make recommendations, to the Association through the Executive Board, about how to enhance or assure professional development through:
  - A] The integration of education and training with the Association's routine or specific activities
  - B] The recommendation of procedures in which education and training on a continuing basis can become a part of the annual evaluation process, be recognized in performance standards and professional qualification, and become a component of the annual contract
- 5] Represent the Association in meetings with other organizations, agencies, or individuals whenever the purpose of the meeting is primarily related to education and training, as approved or directed by the President
- 6] Perform other duties related to education and training that may be assigned by the Executive Board of the Association



*West Region NASAA Member in Stowe, Vermont*



# SPECIAL COMMITTEES

## AUDIT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1] Review the financial records of the Association at all national meetings
- 2] Make recommendations the Committee deems appropriate concerning the finances and accounting procedures of the Association

## AUTOMATION & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1] Provide leadership in issues involving existing and future technologies
- 2] Promote technology as a tool to improve quality of service
- 3] Develop partnerships with other service providers to maximize NASAA technology resources
- 4] Develop and manage a viable Internet web site for the Association and include, as a minimum, the following capabilities:  
Training, News group / List serve, Information dissemination, and Outreach
- 5] Promote online approval capabilities with the VA
- 6] Develop and distribute information to the membership to improve understanding and usage of existing and future technologies
- 7] Develop and update a viable technology plan to be the blueprint for the acquisition and use of existing and future technologies

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1] Develop, implement, and manage NASAA's strategic communications plan
- 2] Prepare and disseminate news and public affairs items
- 3] Create and maintain an effective communications infrastructure
- 4] Provide input and support regarding the NASAA website
- 5] Develop social media outlets to connect and inform NASAA members

## CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1] Plan and develop agendas and programs for the Annual, Midwinter and other general membership meetings, in cooperation with the President
- 2] Review and make decisions or make recommendations to the Association about bids received for general membership meetings at the Annual Business and Training Meetings
- 3] Make logistical and fiscal arrangements for general membership meetings, to include, but not limited to, hotel and meeting accommodations, invitations to guests, outreach and support activities, and administrative support
- 4] Make preliminary plans and arrangements for the succeeding Annual Business and Training Meetings, two years in advance
- 5] Consult with the Alumni Group Coordinator to prepare and coordinate activities for Alumni Group members and extend invitation to attend the Annual Business and Training Meeting

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1] Review the Constitution and Bylaws and prepare amendments or revisions as necessary, either for clarity or Association administration; receive amendments from Association members, review and assess proposals and present to the Association for consideration when the amendments or revisions meet criteria established under the Constitution
- 2] Publish and distribute the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association; ensure publication is available through the web site
- 3] Members of the committee will assist the Judge Advocate, as directed, in conducting the duties of the Judge Advocate and acting as Parliamentarian

## HONORS AND AWARDS / MEMBERSHIP / ALUMNI COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1] Ascertain names of members retiring during the year and prepare certificates of appreciation for presentation at the Annual Business and Training Meeting



- 2] Prepare recommendations for Honors and Awards which the Committee deems appropriate or as directed by the President, Executive Board or Association; present recommendations to the Executive Board for approval; prepare certificates and ceremony for presentation at the Annual Business and Training Meeting
- 3] Refer issues or problems to the President and Executive Board, as needed
- 4] Conduct a Sustaining Membership Drive when authorized by the Executive Board and the Association, and present certificates to Sustaining Members at the Annual Business and Training Meeting
- 5] Coordinate database of NASAA Alumni members; encourage Alumni to become members and participate in Association activities
- 6] Serve as liaison to the Alumni Group Coordinator to provide support for, and coordination with, the Alumni Group

#### **PAST PRESIDENTS COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Serve as a resource of individuals with experience and expertise in matters related to the Association
- 2] Assist the President, at the discretion and specific request of the President, in matters which benefit the Association and are not generally and appropriately within the purview of other Committees of the Association
- 3] Serve as a complement to other committee, subcommittee, council, or task force at the request of the President and Executive Board, or at the request of the group, when appropriate and approved by the President and Board
- 4] Serve as the Nominating Committee with the Immediate Past President serving as Chair
  - A] Present a slate of officers to the Association at the Annual Business and Training Meeting
  - B] Recommend candidates for committee membership or office vacancies, as requested by the Executive Board

#### **ARCHIVES AND HISTORY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Compile and maintain the Archive for documents and records; develop, maintain and document the History for the Association; provide a secured depository for the collection
- 2] Collect information from the Secretary and other sources relating to NASAA activities for the year
- 3] Collate and deposit information in the NASAA Archives depository
- 4] Create historical reports or documents, as requested by the President

#### **JOINT PEER REVIEW GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- 1] Meet, as the Joint Peer Review Group, when and where assembled by the Department of Veterans Affairs
- 2] Provide peer group review and evaluation of the State Approving Agencies'



*NASAA President Frank Myers, Jon Clark, and NASAA Legislative Director Joe Wescott*



# FY 2023 NASAA MOMENTS



Former South RVP Cleo Wallace (LA) & NASAA President Frank Myers (SC)



U.S. Representative Derrick Van Orden (WI) & NASAA President Frank Myers (SC)



Robert Haley (ME) & Former East RVP Jenn St. Jean (VT)



VA Secretary Denis McDonough & Maine SAA



Janice Fisher (VACO) & NASAA President Frank Myers (SC)



Joseph Garcia Executive Director of Education Service & Robert Kohutek (UT)



Dan Wellman (IL), NASAA President Frank Myers (SC), and Yolanda Norris, (CA)



Andrew Martin (WI) & NASAA President Frank Myers (SC)

## 2022-2023 HIGHLIGHT EVENTS

### OCTOBER

NASAA National Training Institute (NTI) in Phoenix, AZ

### FEBRUARY

NASAA Midwinter Conference and Training in Washington, DC  
PACT ACT Resource Fair in Bangor, Maine

### MARCH

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Event at River Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### APRIL

Georgia Association of Veteran Certifying Officials (GAVCO) Conference in Young Harris, Georgia  
Arizona Veterans Program Association (ACPA) Conference at Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona

### JUNE

2023 Florida Association of Veterans Education Specialists (FAVES) Annual SCO Conference in St. Pete Beach, Florida  
IHL SCO Training Session at Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, Massachusetts

### JULY

Association of Veterans Education Certifying Officials (AVECO) Conference in St. Louis, Missouri  
Western Association of Veteran Education Specialists (WAVES) Conference, Reno, Nevada  
Heritage Monument Dedication in honor of African-American service members at the Louisiana Veterans Memorial Park in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### AUGUST

PACT Act Resource Fair in Rumford, Maine  
NASAA Summer Business Meeting in Stowe, Vermont

### SEPTEMBER

2023 Veterans Stand Down at VA Home in Rocky Hill, Connecticut



# LOOKING FORWARD, WE MUST NOT FORGET THE PAST

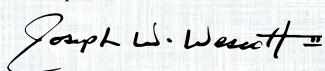
## PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE GI BILL – OUR MOST SOLEMN AND SIGNIFICANT MISSION

NASAA has long been at the forefront of working for legislation that expands Veterans choices in higher education and training, while ensuring that we safeguard the GI Bill® and the quality of the programs we approved. As one former president was fond of saying of SAAs, “We are the engineers of excellence and the gatekeepers of quality.” As such, over the past decade, whether it was the passage of Isakson and Roe, the GI Bill Transparency Act, the Valor Act or any other bill involving veterans education and training, NASAA was usually at the table helping Congress and the VSO community better understand how program approval protects veterans from substandard programs/ training and how careful SAA oversight ensures bad actors do not take advantage of our student veterans. We continue to take our roles in this area, approving quality programs that lead to good paying jobs and better futures for our veterans while at the same time providing oversight to institutions to ensure they remain in compliance with federal and state requirements.

Last, State Approving Agencies began performing Risk Based Surveys at institutions with programs approved for the GI Bill. This new model of oversight, developed by NASAA with funding from the Lumina Foundation and at the behest of Congress, looks at meaningful metrics and outcomes to determine the quality of programs. This method of oversight is programmatic, veteran centric and outcome based. And designed in such a way that SAAs should be able to find schools whose programs are at risk, while at the same time sharing with other institutions best practices that will only better the chances of student veteran success. Next year we will continue to refine and enhance this new oversight method.

In Congress, we will continue to work with our friends and colleagues on the Hill, congressional staff and our VSO allies, to expand and enhance the programs available under the GI Bill. We hope to advance legislation to improve Apprenticeship and OJT participation and outcomes, encourage new programs in vocational and technical fields such as aviation science and cybersecurity training and shore up the safeguards in place to protect our student veterans. Likewise, we will take the lessons learned during the Covid pandemic and possibly expand education and training available on-line, while ensuring quality through more robust approval requirements and the oversight provided by the new RBS model. And in the years to come, SAAs will continue to lean forward to protect our nation’s most precious resources, our veterans, their families and their futures.

Joseph W. Wescott II



NASAA Legislative Director



*Past NASAA Presidents Mike Cruiscolo (CT), Laura Bach (WA), Dan Wellman (IL), Joe Wescott (NC) with current NASAA President Frank Myers (SC)*



# STATE APPROVING AGENCIES DIRECTORY

## WHERE ARE THE STATE APPROVING AGENCIES?

The location of a State Approving Agency within a state's governmental structure varies from state to state. Some states separate the functions of school approvals and OJT/Apprenticeship approvals between different agencies. The decision of where to place a SAA within a state rests with the governor of that state.

In FY23 there were 53 State Approving Agencies covering all 50 states plus Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Washington State is now the only state with 2 SAAs. There are 29 SAAs in state veteran affairs agencies, 14 in state higher education agencies, 6 in state post-secondary education agencies, 2 in elementary and secondary education agencies, and 2 in state workforce development agencies.

## SAA DIRECTORY

### ALABAMA

Alabama State  
Approving Agency  
Alabama Community  
College System  
James A. Thompson: Director  
135 South Union Street  
P.O. Box 302130  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
james.thompson@accs.edu  
Phone: 334-293-4664

### ALASKA

Office of Veterans Affairs  
State of Alaska  
Delma Chapa: SAA Director  
4600 Debarr Rd., Ste. 180  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
delma.chapa@alaska.gov  
Phone: 907- 334-0871  
Fax: 907- 334-0869

### ARIZONA

Arizona Department of  
Veterans' Services  
Arizona State Approving Agency  
Jeff Escobar: SAA Director  
3839 North 3rd Street, Suite 209  
Phoenix, AZ 85012  
jescobar@azdvs.gov  
Phone: 602-255- 5395  
Fax: 602-297-667

### ARKANSAS

Arkansas State Approving  
Agency for Veterans Training  
Arkansas Department of  
Workforce Education  
Bill Dedner: Program Manager  
101 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 300  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
bill.dedner@adhe.edu  
Phone: 501- 324-9473  
Fax: 501-324-9610

### CALIFORNIA

California State Approving Agency  
for Veterans Education (CSAAVE)  
Cheryl Iannello: Assistant  
Deputy Secretary Chief of Private  
Postsecondary Education  
1227 O Street, Ste. 500  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
cheryl.iannello@calvet.ca.gov  
Phone: 916- 503-8317

### COLORADO

Office of Veterans Education  
and Training  
Mike Roberts: Director  
9101 East Lowry Blvd  
Denver, Colorado 80230-6011  
michael.roberts@cccs.edu  
Phone: 720-858-2814  
Fax: 303-595-1621

### CONNECTICUT

State Approving Agency  
Connecticut Office of Higher  
Education  
Michael Criscuolo: SAA Director  
450 Columbus Blvd., Suite 707  
Hartford, CT 06103  
Michael.Criscuolo@ct.gov  
Phone: 860-947-1816  
Fax: 860-947-1310

### DELAWARE

Delaware State Approving Agency  
Patricia Keeton: Director, SAA  
35 Commerce Way  
Dover, DE 19904  
patricia.keeton@doe.k12.de.us  
Phone: 302-8573313  
Fax: 302-739-1770

### FLORIDA

Bureau of State Approving  
for Veterans' Training  
Florida Department of  
Veterans Affairs  
Betsy Wickham: Bureau Chief  
9500 Bay Pines Boulevard,  
Room 214  
Bay Pines, FL 33744  
wickhamb@fdva.state.fl.us  
Phone: 727-319-7402  
Fax: 727-319-7781





# SAA DIRECTORY

## GEORGIA

State Approving Agency  
Georgia Department of  
Veterans Service  
Bobby Davis: Executive Director  
Floyd Veterans Memorial Bldg.,  
Suite E-970  
Atlanta, GA 30334-4800  
saaga@vs.state.ga.us  
Phone: 404-656-2306  
Fax: 404-657-6276

## HAWAII

Hawaii State Approving Agency  
Curtis Washburn, PhD: Director,  
Hawaii State Approving Agency  
3949 Diamond Head Road,  
Building 300, Room 14  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
curtis.washburn@hawaii.edu  
Phone: 808-956-2236

## IDAHO

Idaho Division of Veterans  
Services, Idaho State  
Approving Agency  
Paul Spannkebel: SAA Director  
351 Collins Road  
Boise, ID 83702  
paul.spannkebel@veterans.idaho.  
gov  
Phone: 208-780-1334  
Fax: 208-780-1331

## ILLINOIS

Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Dan Wellman: Administrator  
833 South Spring Street  
P.O. Box 19432  
Springfield, IL 62794-9432  
Dan.wellman@illinois.gov  
Phone: 217-782-7838  
Fax: 217- 524-8394

## INDIANA

Indiana Department of  
Veterans Affairs  
Amber Mertens:  
SAA Director  
777 North Meridian Street,  
Suite 300  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2738  
amertens@dva.IN.gov  
Phone: 317-234-6062  
Fax: 317-234-8744

## IOWA

Iowa Department of Education  
Veterans and Military Education  
Monte Burroughs: Education  
Consultant  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 East 14th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146  
monte.burroughs@iowa.gov  
Phone: 515-281-3317  
Fax: 515-242-5988

## KANSAS

Kansas Commission on Veterans'  
Affairs Office  
Eric Rohleder: SAA Director  
Jayhawk Towers  
700 Southwest Jackson Street,  
Ste. 1004  
Topeka, KS 666033714  
eric.rohleder@ks.gov  
Phone: 785-296-3976  
Fax: 785-296-1462

## KENTUCKY

Kentucky Approving Agency  
for Veterans Education  
Gwen Hacker: Director  
300 North Main Street  
Versailles, KY 40383  
gwen.hacker@kctcs.edu  
Phone: 859-256-3352  
Fax: 859-256-3123

## LOUISIANA

Louisiana Department  
of Veterans Affairs  
Cleophus Wallace: Director  
602 North 5th Street  
P.O. Box 94095 Capitol Station  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095  
cleophus.wallace@la.gov  
Phone: 225-219-5013  
Fax: 225-219-5590

## MAINE

State Approving Agency for  
Veterans Education Programs  
Maine Bureau of Veterans Services  
Eileen Miazga: Director  
117 State House Station  
Augusta, MA 04333-0117  
eileen.miazga@maine.gov  
Phone: 207-430-6033

## MARYLAND

Maryland Higher  
Education Commission  
Everette Jackson, Jr.: Associate  
Director of Veterans Affairs  
6 N. Liberty Street,  
10th Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
everettjackson@maryland.gov  
Phone: 410-767-3301

## MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Department of  
Higher Education  
Office of Veterans Education  
George O'Connor: Assistant  
Commissioner for Academic and  
Veterans Affairs  
One Ashburton Place,  
Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108  
goconnor@dhe.mass.gov  
Phone: 617-994-6925  
Fax: 617-727-0955



# SAA DIRECTORY

## MICHIGAN

Michigan State Approving Agency  
Michigan Department of Labor  
and Economic Opportunity –  
Workforce Development  
Shaftone Dunklin: Higher  
Education Consultant  
Victor Office Center  
201 N. Washington Square,  
3rd Floor  
Lansing, MI 48913  
dunklins@michigan.gov  
Phone: 517-896-7805

## MINNESOTA

Minnesota State Approving  
Agency  
Minnesota Department  
of Veterans Affairs  
Paula Plum: State Program  
Administrative Coordinator  
Veterans Service Building  
20 West 12th Street,  
2nd Floor  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
paula.plum@state.mn.us  
Phone: 651-757-1569  
Fax: 651-296-3954

## MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Veterans Affairs  
Mississippi State Approving Agency  
Cathy McGruder-Jones: Division  
Director  
600 North Street, Suite 200  
Jackson, MS 39202  
cmcgruder@msva.ms.gov  
Phone: 601-576-4867  
Fax: 601-576-4868

## MISSOURI

Veterans' Education  
& Training Section  
Department of Elementary  
& Secondary Education  
James Henley: Director  
3024 Dupont Circle  
Jefferson City, MO 65109  
james.henley@dese.mo.gov  
Phone: 573-751-2571  
Fax: 573- 526-5710

## MONTANA

Montana State Approving  
Agency  
Department of Labor and Industry  
John Stankowiak: Program Manager  
P.O. Box 1728  
Helena, MT 5962 4-1728  
saa@mt.gov  
Phone: 406-444-4122  
Fax: 406-444-3037

## NEBRASKA

Private Postsecondary Career  
Schools & Veterans Education  
Nebraska Department of Education  
Marisol Birth: Director  
500 S. 84th St. 2nd Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68510-2611  
marisol.birth@nebraska.gov  
Phone: 402- 326-4519  
Fax: 402- 560-0268

## NEVADA

Commission on Postsecondary  
Education  
Kelly D. Wuest: CPE Administrator/  
SAA Director  
2800 E. St. Louis Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89104  
kdwuest@detr.nv.gov  
Phone: 702-486-7330  
Fax: 702-486-7340

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Federal & State Approvals Team  
New Hampshire SAA  
nh saa.approvals@va.gov

## NEW JERSEY

Department of Military and  
Veterans Affairs/SAA  
Debra Cho: SAA Bureau Chief  
Eggert Crossing Road  
P.O. Box 340  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0340  
debra.cho@dmava.nj.gov  
Phone: 609- 530-6849  
Fax: 609- 530-7196

## NEW MEXICO

State Approving Agency for  
Veterans' Education and Training  
New Mexico Department of  
Veterans' Services  
Katherine Snyder: SAA Director  
4801 Indian School Road, NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87113  
katherine.snyder@state.nm.us  
Phone: 505-280-1047

## NEW YORK

Bureau of Veterans Education  
William Clarke: Veterans Education  
Program Manager  
2 Empire State Plaza,  
17th Floor  
Albany, NY 12223  
william.clarke@veterans.ny.gov  
Phone: 518-474-7606  
Fax: 518-474-5583

116 West 32nd Street,  
5th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: 212-564-8414  
Fax: 212-564-8443

## NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina State  
Approving Agency  
Timothy D. Freeman:  
Executive Director  
68 TW Alexander Drive  
P.O. Box 13628  
Research Triangle Park,  
NC 27709  
tdfreeman@northcarolina.edu  
Phone: 919-237-7932

## NORTH DAKOTA

State Approving Agency  
ND Department of Veterans Affairs  
Chris Kratochvil: Director  
4201 38th Street South,  
Suite 206  
Fargo, ND 58104-7535  
ckratochvil@nd.gov  
Phone: 701-298-4667  
Fax: 701-239-7166



# SAA DIRECTORY

## OHIO

Ohio Department of Veterans Services  
State Approving Agency for Veterans Education & Training  
Samantha Erickson: Deputy Director 3  
77 S. High Street, 7th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
Samantha.erickson@dvs.ohio.gov  
Phone: 614-466-9287  
Fax: 614-397-7317

## OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Department of Veteran Affairs  
State Approving Agency  
Brint Montgomery, PhD.: Agency Administrator  
2132 NE 36th St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73111  
brint.montgomery@odva.ok.gov  
Phone: 405-522-8076  
Fax: 405-523-4008

## OREGON

Department of Veterans Affairs  
Ebony Frederick-Pettway: SAA Director  
700 Summer St NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
Ebony.frederick-pettway@odva.oregon.gov  
Phone: 503-373-7367  
Fax: 503-373-2393

## PENNSYLVANIA

Division of Veterans/Military Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Denise Verchimak: Division Chief  
333 Market Street, 12th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
dverchimak@pa.gov  
Phone: 717-787-2414  
Fax: 717-772-3622  
  
301 Fifth Avenue, Suite 204  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Phone: 412-565-5364  
Fax: 412-565-5312

## PUERTO RICO

State Approving Agency  
Puerto Rico Department of Education  
Nilmay Perez: Assistant Manager  
P.O. Box 190759  
San Juan, PR 00919-0759  
perezcni@de.pr.gov  
Phone: 787-7733484  
Fax: 787-773-1427

## RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner  
Rebecca Ryan: Program Manager  
560 Jefferson Blvd., Suite 200  
Warwick, RI 02886  
rebecca.Ryan@riopc.edu  
Phone: 401-736-1164  
Fax: 401-732-3541

## SOUTH CAROLINA

State Approving Agency  
Office of Internal Operations and Administration South Carolina  
Commission on Higher Education  
Frank Myers: Director  
220 Stoneridge Drive, Suite 220  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
fmyers@che.sc.gov  
Phone: 803-856-0645  
Fax: 803-7373610

## SOUTH DAKOTA

Veterans' Education  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Shane Olivier: Program Manager  
425 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 575015070  
shane.olivier@state.sd.us  
Phone: 605-773-3648  
Fax: 605-773-5380

## TENNESSEE

Veterans Education  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
Ken Hanson, ED.D: Senior Director  
Veterans Education

312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue,  
9th Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243  
ken.hanson@tn.gov  
Phone: 615-253-7449

## TEXAS

Veterans Education  
Texas Veterans Commission  
David Salgado: Director, Veterans Education  
P.O. Box 12277  
Austin, TX 78711-2277  
david.salgado@tvc.texas.gov  
Phone: 512-463-3168  
Toll Free: 877-898-3833

## UTAH

State Approving Agency for Veterans Education  
Utah Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
Robert Kohutek: SAA Director  
700 Foothill Boulevard  
Salt Lake City, UT 84113  
robertrk@utah.gov  
Phone: 801-584-1972

## VERMONT

Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Education and Training  
Program/State Approving Agency  
Jennifer St. Jean: Director, SAA  
118 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-4414  
jennifer.stjean@vermont.gov  
Phone: 802-828-1082  
Fax: 802-828-5932





# SAA DIRECTORY

## VIRGINIA

Department of Veterans Services  
State Approving Agency  
Patrice Jones: Director of Education Programs  
James Monroe Building  
101 North 14th Street, 17th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219  
patrice.jones@dvs.virginia.gov  
Phone: 804-225-2298  
Fax: 804-786-0809

## WASHINGTON

Washington Student Achievement Council  
State Approving Agency  
Deborah O'Neill: Associate Director  
917 Lakeridge Way  
P.O. Box 43450  
Olympia, WA 985043430  
debbieo@wsac.wa.gov  
Phone: 360-485-1209  
Fax: 360-704-6239

Workforce Training and Education  
Coordinating Board  
State Approving Agency  
Darlene Bartlett: Program Manager

128 10th Ave SW  
P.O. Box 43105  
Olympia, WA 985043105  
darlene.bartlett@wtb.wa.gov  
Phone: 360-709-4600  
Fax: 360-586-5862

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

DC Higher Education Licensure Commission  
Angela Lee: Executive Director  
1050 1st Street, NE 5th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
angela.lee@dc.gov  
Phone: 202-727-6436

## WEST VIRGINIA

Office of Veterans Education and Training Programs  
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Rikki McCormick: Director  
1018 Kanawha Boulevard, Suite 700  
Charleston, WV 25301  
rikki.mccormick@wvhepc.edu  
Phone: 304-558-0263  
Fax: 304-558-0089

## WISCONSIN

State Approving Agency  
Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs  
April Heim: Director  
2135 Rimrock Road  
Madison, WI 53708-7843  
april.heim1@dva.wisconsin.gov  
Phone: 608-261-8771  
Toll Free: 800-947-8387  
Fax: 608-267-0403

## WYOMING

State Approving Agency  
Wyoming Military Department  
Timothy Fisher: Wyoming SAA Director  
5410 Bishop Boulevard  
Cheyenne, WY 82009  
timothy.fisher@wyo.gov  
Phone: 307-777-8161  
Fax: 307-777-8105



*South Region NASAA Members in Stowe, Vermont*



# AWARDS, HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

The success of NASAA relies on the hard work of our membership and their willingness to contribute their time through various leadership roles, committee work, and projects. Their devotion to our mission and to protecting the integrity of the GI Bill® not only is a reflection of the work our SAA members do each and every day within their states, but demonstrates a desire to be part of something greater than themselves.

In honor of these individual's voluntary work, NASAA makes every effort to recognize the exemplary contributions each year.

NASAA truly appreciates each of our members and is honored to recognize the following individuals for the FY2023 year!



Laura Bach (WA) and Frank Myers,  
NASAA President (SC)

## **NASAA LIFETIME LEADERSHIP AWARD**

Laura Bach (WA)  
Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.)

## **PRESIDENT'S AWARD**

Andrew Martin (WI)  
Cleophus Wallace (LA)

## **NASAA SERVICE AWARD**

Jon Clark

## **STAR AWARDS**

Laura Bach (WA)  
Marisol Birth (NE)  
Tramaine Carroll-Payne (VA)  
Lisa Deneen (OR)  
Shane Ferebee (CA)  
Janice Fisher (USDVA)  
Chris Garcia (TX)  
Ed Godfrey (MN)  
Gwen Hacker (KY)  
Robert Haley (ME)  
James Henley (MO)  
Michelle Hill (VA)  
John Hose (MO)  
Everette Jackson (MD)  
Torrence Joseph (LA)

Michael Marks (USDVA)  
John Murray (WA)  
Deb O'Neil (WA)  
Andy Pieper (IL)  
Stephen Rudnick (OK)  
Rebecca Ryan (RI)  
David Salgado (TX)  
Kathy Snyder (NM)  
Lily Snyder (GA)  
Jennifer St. Jean (VT)  
Judy Schuler (TX)  
Crystal Standifer (SC)  
Don Sweeney (ME)  
Cleophus Wallace (LA)  
Dan Wellman (IL)  
Joe Westcott (NC)  
Kathleen Vonk (NY)

## **2023 MIDWINTER BUSINESS & TRAINING MEETING CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION:**

Laura Bach (WA)  
Tramaine Carroll-Payne (VA)  
Kaleb Cornett (KY)  
Leanna DeKing (AZ)  
Terasita Edwards (DC)  
Tim Fisher (WY)

Michael Flynn (MO)  
Kevin Glears (SC)  
Ken Hanson (TN)  
Brigette Hayes (KS)  
Everette Jackson (MD)  
Torrence Joseph (LA)  
Tara Monk (TX)  
Frank Myers (SC)  
Andy Pieper (IL)  
Lex Ann Roach (NE)  
Rebecca Ryan (RI)  
David Salgado (TX)  
Karol Scheetz (OH)  
Ronnie Smith (KY)  
Kathy Snyder (NM)  
Crystal Standifer (SC)  
Maia Turner (ME)

## **2023 SUMMER BUSINESS & TRAINING MEETING CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION:**

Laura Bach (WA)  
Tramaine Carroll-Payne (VA)  
Michael Criscuolo (CT)  
Lisa Deneen (OR)  
Myra Dollar (CO)  
Bill Dwigins (TX)  
Samantha Erickson (OH)

Ed Godfrey (MN)  
Gwen Hacker (KY)  
Wayne Holmes (MD)  
Cheryl Iannello (CA)  
Everette Jackson (MD)  
Theodore Jimenez (CO)  
Patti Keaton (DE)  
Angela Lee (DC)  
Andrew Martin (WI)  
Josee Martin (AZ)  
Jusup McChesney (PA)  
Eileen Miazga (ME)  
Tara Monk (TX)  
Andy Pieper (IL)  
Olayta Rigsby (MD)  
David Salgado (TX)  
Judy Schuler (TX)  
Kathy Snyder (NM)  
Jennifer St. Jean (VT)  
Crystal Standifer (SC)  
Laura Taylor (AL)  
Jose Toro (FL)  
Cleophus Wallace (LA)  
George O'Connor (MA)  
Kathleen Vonk (NY)  
Joe Westcott (NC)  
Denise Verchimak (PA)



# EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS



**FRANK MYERS**  
PRESIDENT



**MICHAEL CRISCUOLO**  
IMMEDIATE PAST  
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**ANDREW  
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**EVERETTE  
JACKSON JR.**  
EAST REGION  
VICE PRESIDENT



**LILY  
SNYDER**  
SOUTH REGION  
VICE PRESIDENT



# IN LOVING MEMORY OF ANNIE WALKER



## In Memoriam

This Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Annie Walker, former Deputy Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs and a member of NASAA for well over three decades. Annie served as President from 2019 until 2021. During her presidency, indeed throughout her life, this former Army drill sergeant was a tireless worker for Veterans and their families in her beloved Virginia and throughout the nation.

As President, Annie was a bold visionary and true servant leader. During her two terms, NASAA signed its first Memorandum of Understanding with the National Association of State Departments of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), which established this important alliance for veterans and their families which remains even stronger today. Also during her Presidency, Annie oversaw the first national grant received by NASAA, almost half a million dollars that was used to establish a new national model of oversight which looks at meaningful measures and objectives to evaluate program quality across the nation, today's all important Risk Based Reviews. Finally, Annie led NASAA and its member SAAs into and through the uncharted waters of the COVID-19 pandemic. As NASAA held its first ever virtual conference, Annie was fearless in her support of the new role of SAAs and her leadership helped keep the doors open of these state agencies by embracing online methods of delivery and supporting our legislative efforts to ensure Veterans could continue to use their benefits in the new educational environment.

Her vision and leadership through difficult days and challenging times, will not be forgotten. And her example of selfless service will guide us in the decades that come. Thank you President Annie Walker. This one is for you!

### **Jospeh Wescott, NASAA Legislative Director, North Carolina SAA**

I've had the pleasure to know and work with a great person and mentor, Annie Walker, NASAA's Past President, for almost two decades. Annie was a vibrant and a dedicated member in NASAA. Annie always answered my telephone calls to provide advice or just as a listening ear. I am deeply saddened by the loss of Annie. I will miss her radiant smile but I know that she is in a better place where there's no more pain, and no more sorrows. The memories that we've shared throughout the years will live on and for that, I thank you Annie. God has called his warrior home to be with him. We will see each other again where the streets are paved with gold. Rest in peace Annie, rest in peace...

### **Frank Myers, NASAA President**

Annie was a brilliant and visionary leader who achieved national recognition for her work in the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA). She served several years in leadership positions in NASAA including two years as NASAA's President. She was passionate about providing quality education and training to our nation's veterans and eligible persons who use their GI Bill® educational benefits. We will long remember Annie's energy, tenacity and ability to solve complex issues.

Annie was the one I could always depend on to catch errors buried deep in spreadsheets. She would always assist me during my many years serving as the NASAA South Region VP, catching any missed topics during our regional meetings. Annie was my mentor and my friend who helped me recognize my potential and growth as a NASAA professional.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Annie's family, as we stand in solidarity to support them during this time of mourning. Annie, thank you and now it is time for you to take your eternal rest.

### **Cleo Wallace, Director, Louisiana State Approving Agency (SAA)**

Ms. Annie Walker joined the Virginia Department of Education in 2004 as an Education Specialist for the State Approving Agency. When the SAA program was moved to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in 2005, she then began her 18-year career with DVS. She officially retired 1 November 2023.

Additionally, Annie had a hand in the creation, launching, success and leadership of many of DVS' most successful programs including the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program, the Military Medics & Corpsmen (MMAC) Program, the Virginia Women Veterans Program, the Military Spouse Support Initiative, the Suicide Prevention and Opioid Addiction Services (SOS) Program, and more.

For more on Annie's journey visit "My Stories" NASAA podcast. Listen to Annie in her own words about her life after the military, NASAA and family. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/7dzTlHvH9oe0LWLdD8uhd?si=d581cc9670ea4af1&nd=1&dlsi=3ddc65deec3472f>







# NASAA

National Association of State Approving Agencies for Veterans Education and Training

220 Stoneridge Drive, Suite 220, Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803-856-0645

[www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov)