

Disabled American Veterans  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
DAV...because the battle never ends



## MISSION STATEMENT

Made up exclusively of men and women disabled in our nation's defense, the Disabled American Veterans is dedicated to one, single purpose — building better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families. This mission is carried forward by:

- ★ Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government;
- ★ Providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically;
- ★ Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;
- ★ Extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level Departments and local Chapters; and
- ★ Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.

As adopted by the National Executive Committee  
August 22, 1998

## ORGANIZATIONAL VISION AND VALUES

### VISION

The Disabled American Veterans is committed to fulfilling its mission of building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families through service, quality, integrity and leadership in representation and advocacy support now and in the future. We will maintain the highest ethical standards as a charitable organization through which our society can express its gratitude to the men and women who continue to pay the price of our nation's freedom.

### VALUES

- ★ **Service:** To build better lives for service-connected disabled veterans and their families and to keep the DAV mission first and foremost in all that we do.
- ★ **Quality:** To provide the highest possible quality representation and advocacy services to veterans, their families and survivors.
- ★ **Integrity:** To maintain the highest ethical and moral standards as a charitable service organization accountable to those we serve as well as to those who support us.
- ★ **Leadership:** To plan strategically and act to guarantee our future preeminence as a provider of advocacy and voluntary services to veterans.

## GOALS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

**GOAL 1:** Enhance DAV's position as the preeminent provider of professional service and advocacy for veterans and their families.

**Issue:** Serve the needs of America's veterans and their families as a proactive advocate.

**Strategy:**

- ★ Explore new programs to better serve veterans and their families.
- ★ Attract, train and retain qualified and committed career service officers and staff.
- ★ Provide necessary resources to meet the needs of veterans and their families.
- ★ Ensure the best use of technology and business practices to implement and support nationwide operations, programs and services.
- ★ Expand recognition program to acknowledge the efforts and leadership of exemplary service officers and staff.

**GOAL 2:** Increase membership in DAV and its Auxiliary and provide opportunities for a new generation of veterans to become involved in DAV programs and activities.

**Issue:** DAV faces a risk of declining membership and decreasing member participation. Specific factors contributing to the situation: an aging member population who are less able to participate in meetings and programs serving veterans; and younger potential members who are less attracted to fraternal organizations than previous generations.

**Strategy:**

- ★ Revitalize recruitment campaigns to attract potential members.
- ★ Develop new incentives for membership recruitment.
- ★ Strengthen recognition program to acknowledge the efforts and leadership of exemplary members and recruiters.
- ★ Expand Web-based fraternal activities.

**GOAL 3:** Recruit and retain volunteers to improve the quality of service to disabled veterans and their families.

**Issue:** DAV needs to replenish and expand its corps of volunteers to meet the changing environment within VA and elsewhere.

**Strategy:**

- ★ Create new volunteer opportunities and foster an environment where our volunteers work together for the common goal of service to veterans and their families.
- ★ Create and support volunteer partnerships with public and private entities.
- ★ Design and promote youth volunteer initiatives.
- ★ Publicize the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program.
- ★ Expand recognition program to acknowledge the efforts and leadership of exemplary volunteers.

**GOAL 4:** Build government and public support for veterans' issues.

**Issue:** Veterans' issues are not perceived as a national priority. DAV must increase its efforts to restore veterans to their rightful place as an American treasure treated with respect, honor and dignity.

- Strategy:** ★ Encourage government and public figures to speak out on veterans' issues.  
★ Intensify efforts to shape public policy regarding veterans' issues.  
★ Develop recognition program to acknowledge those who support veterans' issues.

**GOAL 5:** Educate all segments of the public about DAV and its mission of service and advocacy for disabled veterans and their families.

**Issue:** Lack of widespread awareness of "who we are and what we do."

- Strategy:** ★ Strengthen our identity branding campaign to promote greater public awareness of DAV and distinguish us from the Department of Veterans Affairs and other veterans' service organizations.  
★ Expand use of key staff and select individual DAV members as "ambassadors" to public, private and civic organizations.  
★ Identify target audiences for expanded public outreach initiatives and tailored communications materials.

**GOAL 6:** Refine fundraising programs with innovative methodologies to optimize results.

**Issue:** Changing demographics and methodologies of fundraising challenges our ability to generate support from the general public.

- Strategy:** ★ Evaluate, develop and implement effective marketing strategies and objectives.  
★ Adapt strategies and contingency plans to address external threats to direct marketing fundraising.  
★ Enhance recognition program to acknowledge the contribution of exemplary supporters.



Since its founding in 1920, the Disabled American Veterans has been dedicated to a single purpose: building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. Fidelity to that mission has required DAV to respond creatively and flexibly to changing and sometimes unpredictable problems faced by its constituency. Whether disabled veterans have needed a voice on Capitol Hill, a nationwide service program, a transportation network or unique rehabilitation opportunities, DAV has focused its attention and resources to meet those needs.

The current environment presents a unique set of challenges to which DAV must respond. The explosion of the "information superhighway" and developments in computer science affect virtually every area of DAV's operations, from fundraising to claims advocacy. So too, the changing needs of the veteran population require adaptation by both DAV and the federal government, a government increasingly prone to cost-cutting and led largely by persons with no military experience and little passion for veterans' issues.

Recognizing that the future presents both enormous challenges and breathtaking opportunities to DAV, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson in 1998 commissioned a team of select DAV managers to begin work on a Strategic Plan to ensure the continued viability and vitality of DAV well into the 21st century. Since then, input has been gathered from DAV leaders throughout the entire organization. Their insights have been incorporated into this Strategic Plan, which, like DAV, is intended to be flexible and responsive to the ever-changing needs of disabled veterans and their families. This Strategic Plan is a blueprint for DAV to remain the greatest veterans' service organization in the world. America's disabled veterans deserve nothing less.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process began in October 1998 with an evaluation of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities by DAV senior management staff. Since its debut in 1999, the Strategic Plan has undergone two major amendments: once following a review in October 2002 and again in May 2007. The latest evaluation afforded a comprehensive analysis to correct, update and improve the entire document to address current and future challenges.

Each of the goals, issues and strategies were examined and modified as necessary to clarify their meaning and increase their effectiveness. This multi-step process involved many hours of constructive debate by experienced DAV professionals striving to identify the current status, objectives and strategies of the organization.

The most notable modification to the Plan was the elimination of the former Goal 4: Develop effective leaders, staff and volunteers throughout the organization. Acknowledging that leadership is integral to every objective, this central theme was merged into each of the Plan's goals as a strategy to expand recognition programs and commend the leadership efforts of individuals within the organization.

The Strategic Plan is a dynamic and forward-looking document designed to allow DAV members, program directors and managers to think strategically and act operationally. Implementation of this exemplary tool will make building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families more successful and enable DAV to be more responsive to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

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