

October 29 and 30, 2018

National Stakeholder Summit Summary

VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA



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A. Executive Summary

The Minister of Veterans Affairs Lawrence MacAulay is committed to meeting with Veterans, their families and stakeholders on Veterans Affairs Canada's policies, benefits, programs and services.

On October 29 and 30, 2018 in Ottawa, Ontario, the former Minister, Seamus O'Regan, and Veterans Affairs Canada Deputy Minister Walter Natynczyk were joined by 175 participants representing over 60 stakeholder organizations, Veterans, members of the Minister's six advisory groups, subject matter experts and government officials.

Stakeholders' knowledge and insights are invaluable. The intent of the National Stakeholder Summit was to provide a forum to share information and hear feedback on existing, new, and upcoming benefits and services, as well as other issues of interest to the participants. The National Stakeholder Summit was a culmination of more than 40 events hosted throughout 2018 by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Department, including regional summits, town halls and roundtables.

The central themes raised at the National Stakeholder Summit related most often to the following themes:

- Canadian Armed Forces — Veterans Affairs Canada transition
- Research and mental health
- Service standards
- Parliamentary reporting cycle and lapsed funds

- New Veterans Affairs Canada programs and benefits (e.g., Education and Training Benefit, Veteran Family Program)
- Veteran homelessness
- Pension for Life
- Communication and engagement

Feedback from both the National Stakeholder Summit and the meetings with Veterans and stakeholders across the country over the past year continues to be shared with the program, policy and service-delivery areas of the Department. The experiences, insights and passion shared will help shape the ways through which we strive to improve the lives of the Veterans and their families.

Please note: The agenda for the National Stakeholder Summit can be found in Appendix A and the participating organizations can be found in Appendix B. The presentations delivered at the summit can be found in the remaining appendices.

B. National Summit Topics and Discussions

Opening Remarks

In his opening address, Minister Seamus O'Regan thanked all stakeholders for their ongoing input and commitment to the well-being of Veterans and their families. To this end, he emphasized that he will be renewing the Ministerial Advisory Groups in their current form.

Minister O'Regan highlighted a number of changes Veterans Affairs Canada has made to help support Veteran well-being. Some of these changes included the Veteran identification card, the Centre of Excellence on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Related Mental Health Conditions, the Service Dog tax credit, Veterans Affairs Canada's new and enhanced benefits (e.g. Education and Training Benefit) and the upcoming Pension for Life. He emphasized that the National Stakeholder Summit is an opportunity for stakeholders to share their recommendations with Veterans Affairs Canada directly, and an opportunity for Veterans Affairs Canada to listen.

Theme #1: Transition

The Chief of the Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces introduced the Transition Panel by remarking on the importance of placing individuals first ("people first, mission always") when it comes to transitioning out of the military. He emphasized the importance of doing transition well to optimize the well-being of the organization and of those it serves.

Opening remarks were then delivered on regional summit outcomes (Appendix C) and the new Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group.

Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces are working together on a joint approach to assist transitioning members and their families prepare for civilian life. This joint approach includes identifying local networks of resources for Veterans and their families, eliminating duplication of work between the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada, and including families throughout the transition process.

By focusing on the seven domains of well-being (e.g., purpose, health, finances, housing and physical environment, social integration, life skills, and culture and social environment), Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces are working towards an individualized "outdoctrination" process, which will be based on the members, their families and their needs. As well, the Joint Personnel Support Units will be transitioning to Canadian Armed Forces Transition Groups, shifting from a model of supporting ill and injured members to supporting all members—and their families' transition.

The summit then convened into four interactive breakout groups to discuss transition. The central themes of the breakout groups included the following:

- The importance of addressing the unique transition needs faced by families, Reservists, young Veterans (under 30 years old), single Veterans and women Veterans to ensure that no one falls through the cracks.



- The definition of transition includes not only members who are transitioning to civilian life, but also Reservists who are transitioning from Regular Force service back to the Reserves.
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police transition is significantly different from Canadian Armed Forces transition, and it would be helpful to have more Royal Canadian Mounted Police representation on transition at future summits.
- The difficulty of finding a family doctors, de-stigmatizing the Joint Personal Support Units, engaging families in transition process, navigating agencies, and difficulty identifying those members who may be at risk.
- Suggestions offered to help support transition included:
 - financial coaching;
 - having doctors invite families to be part of the transition process;
 - offering all members a Veterans Affairs Canada telephone number on release;
 - creating women-only transition support groups;
 - identifying Veteran files Government-wide (e.g., having a Veteran identified on Canada Revenue Agency files);
 - creating an application or portal with centralized information on Veterans Affairs Canada, Canadian Armed Forces and external agencies;
 - strengthening validation processes and governance frameworks for third-party providers; and
 - rethinking the medical release process (i.e., finding opportunities within the Canadian Armed Forces for ill and injured Veterans).

Theme #2: Research and mental health

The Research and Mental Health panelists began by offering some preliminary remarks on the work of their respective areas. The 2017 Canadian Armed Forces / Veterans Affairs Canada Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy Action Plan was highlighted and examples of completed action items were provided, such as increased awareness and training on military sexual trauma, increased access to mental health care support through Operational Stress Injury clinics, and continued support of Mental Health First Aid training for Veterans.

From a research perspective, three research areas were provided as examples of Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces working to understand the mental health and wellbeing of Veterans and their families: the Life After Service Study; a longitudinal study on the mental health of Canadian Armed Forces serving members in collaboration with the University of Manitoba; and the 2017 Veteran Suicide Mortality Study.

An update was provided on the Centre of Excellence on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Related Mental Health Conditions at the Royal Ottawa Hospital.

From a Canadian Armed Forces perspective, three main areas of clinical mental health research were described: understanding the biological underpinnings of post-traumatic stress disorder (e.g., looking at inflammation in the body and joints); leveraging technology (e.g., imaging technology, data mining and artificial intelligence); and using precision or personalized medicine.

Following the panel discussion, the floor was opened to questions. The following points were raised:

- Comparable treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder that have outcomes like service dogs;



- Changes in the table of disabilities, as the last update was in 2006;
- Baseline testing for traumatic brain injuries done for members; and
- Gender disaggregated data in mental health and the increased number of healthcare providers who experience suicidality.

Theme #3: Service standards

Veterans Affairs Canada Service standards were discussed by the Minister of Veterans Affairs. The Minister suggested several areas for focus, including the following:

- When members release, they get services when they need that continue throughout their life;
- Assessments or application process are streamlined to minimize efforts for applicants; and
- Veterans have an uncomplicated and compassionate experience with Veterans Affairs Canada, regardless of where they live and the service channel they choose.

There was a presentation (Appendix D) and demonstration of the new online wait-time tool. The initial version of the tool is scheduled to be released in November 2018 and will display the current average wait times for Veterans Affairs Canada programs and services.

The summit convened into four interactive breakout groups to discuss service standards in more detail. The central themes of the breakout groups included the following:

- Processing time for applications is important, but so is quality;

- Communication should be improved between Veterans Affairs Canada and Veterans regarding application processing times and the solicitation of missing information (e.g., Veterans Affairs Canada may have application paperwork for a long time, but then asks Veterans for a quick turnaround time);
- One assessment/one examination may speed up applications and eliminate the multiple claim system;
- Veterans Affairs Canada should consider providing treatment eligibility before a decision is rendered (e.g., temporary assessments);
- Trust medical professionals instead of sending Veterans to multiple medical professionals for reevaluation;
- Educate Veterans on the Table of Disabilities and every decision should provide clarity on clinical aspects;
- Veterans Affairs Canada could consult with other sectors (private sector, health care) to improve turnaround times;
- Benefit of the doubt should be given to Veterans more often, particularly for common issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder and bruxism;
- Some participants suggested that transition should be personalized and individualized, and others highlighted that Veterans should be treated the same across the board.
- Suggestions for service standard improvements included:
 - The wait-time tool should give actual status of a Veteran's application (e.g., "real-time" updates, tracker system, make it clear when the timer starts) and continue to give updates throughout the entire application process;
 - Implement disincentives for Veterans Affairs Canada for not processing files in time;



- Switch the burden of proof to Veterans Affairs Canada to prove the Veteran is ineligible for benefits, instead of Veteran having to prove eligibility;
- Create a benefits claim intake division dedicated to reviewing applications as soon as they arrive;
- Expand the number of banks Veterans Affairs Canada works with so every Veteran can access My VAC Account services;
- Online services should be black and white so that they are accessible for the visually impaired;
- Make the emailing service on My VAC Account faster; and
- Provide direct access to Veterans Affairs Canada Case Managers.

Theme #4: From idea to implementation: parliamentary reporting cycle and lapsed funds

A presentation (Appendix E) was delivered which described the process of how Government works from the idea stage through to implementation. As part of the process, the three steps were explained:

1. policy approval through a Memorandum to Cabinet, where the responsible Minister would explain the proposal;
2. funding approval via the budget process where the question of cost is examined in detail; and
3. program approval through a Treasury Board submission where the question of how we will deliver on a new program or service is addressed. Pension for Life—from idea to implementation—was used as an example to explain this process.

The lapsing of funds was also addressed. It was explained that Veterans Affairs Canada program funding is non-discretionary, demand-driven and

based on need or eligibility (quasi-statutory). The funds set aside are updated annually based on a forecast. Any funds remaining at the end of the year (lapsed funds) do not impact the funds available in subsequent years. This is in comparison to operational expenditures of Government that could impact funds available in future years.

Theme #5: New Veterans Affairs Canada programs and benefits

A presentation (Appendix F) was delivered on five new Veterans Affairs Canada programs and services: Veteran Family Program, Career Transition Services, Education and Training Benefit, Veterans Emergency Fund, and Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund. The overview was followed by a question and answer period on the new programs and services.

The following points were raised:

- In lieu of providing scoring details for unsuccessful applicants to the Veteran Families Well-Being Fund, Veterans Affairs Canada is willing to have a general conversation with applicants regarding the fund.
- Regarding the Education and Training Benefit, concerns were raised regarding the confirmation of number of days of service.
- A question was raised regarding why the Education and Training Benefit is taxed and it was clarified that this decision was not made within Veterans Affairs Canada. A request was made for Veterans Affairs Canada to take into consideration having a short-course program within vocational rehabilitation, similar to the \$5000 short-course program within the Education and Training Benefit.



- Regarding Career Transition Services, an enquiry was made into whether Agilec could start referring Veterans to stakeholders who have jobs for Veterans. The importance of developing transition plans early was underscored.
- Concerns were raised regarding the plan for knowledge distribution for younger Veterans and the importance of simplifying programs (e.g., vocational rehabilitation).

Theme #6: Veteran homelessness

The panel on Veteran homelessness provided several perspectives on the unique challenges of homelessness in Veteran communities.

Homelessness was described as having several drivers, some of which may be medical, such as addiction, mental health, undiagnosed developmental disabilities and brain injuries. It was emphasized that we should care for homeless communities non-judgmentally. Furthermore, it was suggested that previously homeless Veterans with lived experience could be engaged as peers, leaders, or mentors in the work to prevent and end homelessness.

The importance of rebuilding Canada's housing system was highlighted. As well, the urgency of identifying homeless Veterans and the gendered experience of homelessness were identified as key issues. The unique military experiences of Veterans were described as potential drivers for homelessness; for example, multiple injuries or health conditions, stress, or long absences from family or supports.

The regional summit outcomes on Veteran homelessness were presented (Appendix G). Veterans Affairs Canada noted that it is working with community organizations to identify homeless Veterans. Veterans Affairs Canada has also appointed point persons at each area office and has been using a Veteran homelessness indicator to

track homelessness. Services and programs such as Veterans Affairs Canada's Veteran Emergency Fund and the Veterans Affairs Canada Assistance Line help support homeless Veterans. Furthermore, Veterans Affairs Canada has created an online interactive map listing over a hundred homelessness organizations.

During the question and answer period after the homelessness panel, the discussion was framed by the idea that there is no "one size fits all" when it comes to Veteran homelessness. The continued importance of listening to local needs to ensure non-judgmental, comprehensive care was emphasized.

Participants noted that when it comes to transition in the context of homelessness, "keys and an apartment are not enough," as some Veterans may need mentoring or lifelong support. Stakeholders noted that homelessness is a gendered experience and better data is necessary for understanding women Veterans' experiences. Unique challenges exist based on individual geography and rural and urban differences. Participants emphasized that mixed community housing is central as the process of "warehousing" vulnerable people does not work.

After the panel and the question and answer period, the summit convened into four interactive breakout groups to discuss Veteran homelessness. What we heard:

- Turnaround times need to be faster for services for homeless Veterans. There is a need for a clear vetting process for organizations working in the field of Veteran homelessness. It may be helpful to create a directory of various agencies who hire Veterans. Case management of Veterans is a key component.
- There was positive feedback received on Veterans Affairs Canada's online interactive map listing over a hundred homelessness organizations.

- There are significant issues with Veterans not wanting to self-identify, but also issues with false identifications of Veterans by police.
- Not all organizations will be a good fit for all Veterans, so it is important to have options. A suggestion was made to merge organizations which help Veterans and redirect funding to these organizations, or to create a hub for homelessness organizations. Fundraising challenges were raised regarding how to get people to donate money for Veteran homelessness.
- Better communication and networking is key between federal departments (e.g., Canada Revenue Agency and Veterans Affairs Canada), between those organizations, between homelessness organizations and Veterans Affairs Canada, and between different levels of Government.
- It was noted that one of the determinants of health is dental hygiene and a suggestion was raised to provide better dental healthcare for Veterans.

Participants raised a number of suggestions for preventing and ending homelessness:

- Offer a mentorship program when members are transitioning out of the military (e.g., a peer support model of “Veterans helping Veterans”);
- Implement a registry system for Veterans to keep them connected to the Department (e.g., sending out Remembrance Day Letters, discounts related to identification card);

Suggestions for housing were raised, including:

- Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence could work together to decommission military housing (e.g., private married quarters) and turn it into social housing;
- Shipping container homes;

- Tiny houses for Veterans (e.g., Calgary Tiny Home Village model);
- Engagement with Habitat for Humanity; and
- Example given of a First Nation community that wants to house Veterans.

Theme #7: Pension for Life

Two new Pension for Life tools were demonstrated during this session: the guided web form and the enhanced status tracker. The guided web form was designed based on feedback from Veterans with the goal of taking the application process burden off Veterans and families. With the guided web form, Veterans can complete the form on their own time and only need to answer questions based on their situation.

The enhanced status tracker feature was created to enhance transparency and improve usability. Currently in prototype form, the enhanced status tracker includes the full time to process applications and is designed to help people understand the application process. Additional updates are ongoing and Veterans Affairs Canada is looking to incorporate any feedback on the tool.

The aim is to make application processes easier for all who will use it including medical staff.

Theme #8: Communication and engagement

The communication and engagement session was introduced by highlighting some of the conversations held at regional stakeholder summits (Appendix H). Several priority areas were emphasized, including how to get information out to stakeholders and Veterans, how this information is being used, how Veterans Affairs Canada should be interacting with the stakeholder community, and



how to improve the Veterans Affairs Canada website.

The summit convened into four interactive breakout groups to discuss communication and engagement. The central themes and suggestions from the breakout groups were as follows:

- There needs to be more effort put into Veterans Affairs Canada's website to improve user experience and to help organizations find the policy information they need to communicate back to their clients. Fact sheets are helpful but detailed policy information is needed.
- A line of communication with mid-level Veterans Affairs Canada officials at the Head Office would be beneficial for organizations.
- Establishing contacts at Veterans Affairs Canada area offices would be helpful so that organizations can promote their programs to Veterans Affairs Canada.
- Veterans are tired of being passed through different phone lines and would like access to better and faster communication for help and direction.
- There was a request to have more detailed and personalized replies from written correspondence coming back from the Minister and Department.
- Partner with established organizations to assist Veterans Affairs Canada communicate out to their membership and ensure messaging is relevant to their members.
- Regular communication needs to be established between Veterans Affairs Canada and Veterans. When Veterans can rely on receiving regular information updates, they will know when and where to look for it (e.g., weekly updates on Facebook).
- Push out high quality information more frequently to reduce anxiety and apprehension. Information needs to be consistent and needs to be found on all channels.
- Include an "effective as of" date on brochures.
- Veterans are all different, and we need to utilize all methods of communication to reach them:
 - Use of hard copy to communicate (e.g., Salute! magazine) vs. the Internet;
 - Use Facebook;
 - Use webinars, podcasts or teleconferences to transmit information and feedback from organizations to Veterans Affairs Canada and vice versa;
 - Provide a real-time chat on the Veterans Affairs Canada website for quick answers to questions.



C. Question and Answer Periods

Over the two days of the National Stakeholder Summit, there were opportunities for participants to engage in direct dialogue with the Minister and Deputy Minister. These question and answer periods offered participants an opportunity to ask questions outside the areas listed on the agenda.

What we heard

1. Advisory groups

- Participants sought clarification regarding the Minister's announcement to re-energize advisory groups. It was noted that the submitted recommendations at the 2016 National Stakeholder Summit have not yet been implemented. The Minister noted that although the priority was ensuring Pension for Life was on track, there was room for improvement and he continued to need the counsel of advisory groups on current and new policies.
- Participants noted that single members and gender-specific voices should be added to advisory groups.
- A member from the Advisory Group on Families highlighted that they have been successful in achieving their goals.

2. Caregivers

- A spouse and caregiver of a Veteran noted that people who care for Veterans living with mental illness are not considered caregivers, and that she is requesting support for respite.

- A question was raised regarding the accessibility of the Caregiver Recognition Benefit and how many applications had been approved.
- A question was raised regarding the amount for the Caregiver Recognition Benefit. It was noted by a participant that when the member leaves the military the payment decreases by a third.

3. Benefits and services

- A participant questioned the Department's service dog policy. Under the Veterans Affairs Canada suite of benefits, a guide dog allowance is payable, but while all guide dogs are service dogs, all service dogs are not guide dogs.
- A stakeholder commented that while the Education and Training Benefit and Veterans Affairs Canada identification card are moving in the right direction, Veterans Affairs Canada should consider focusing on minor benefits for all Veterans (e.g., doing all Veterans' taxes). The Veterans Affairs Canada identification card and My VAC Account were highlighted as ways to reach more Veterans.
- The status of the elimination of the marriage after 60 claw-back clause was raised by a participant. There was also a request for confirmation of parity with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on the survivor benefit increase and the marriage after 60 clause.



- A suggestion was raised that the transition period should begin prior to release, so that the member can learn to become a civilian while they are still in uniform (e.g., a member could remain under the Department of National Defence umbrella, but receive Veterans Affairs Canada rehabilitation and treatment benefits).

4. Pension for Life

- There was a request to harmonize programs so that Veterans under the *Pension Act* could have access to new benefits, and that the Table of Disabilities could be adjusted.
- Participants requested increased training for case managers to better explain Pension for Life to Veterans and their families.

5. Gender

- A stakeholder noted that if the Canadian Armed Forces were looking to recruit more women, they needed to look at gender-specific programs and guarantee that the Centre of Excellence would look at gender issues, as well as include a female Veteran lens in the Mental Health Advisory Group.
- The tracking of military sexual trauma cases at Veterans Affairs Canada was raised, particularly regarding how many cases were approved or denied and what was needed for proof. It was noted that Veterans Affairs Canada was working with Department of National Defence to ensure the right criteria were used.

6. Other

- One participant expressed concern regarding the proposed location of the National Memorial to Canada's mission in Afghanistan.

Other comments focused on the idea of a covenant between Veterans and the Government; privacy standards for third-party providers (e.g., Agilec); and ensuring federal departments (e.g., Department of National Defence, Canadian Revenue Agency, and Employment and Social Development Canada) have common definitions of disability (physical, mental health or both).

D. Next Steps

The National Stakeholder Summit provided a valuable opportunity to hear from Veterans, their families and stakeholders. The Department is committed to ensuring that Veterans have uncomplicated and compassionate experiences with Veterans Affairs Canada.

Moving forward, Veterans Affairs Canada will continue working to ensure Veterans and their families receive the services they need, where and when they need them, and that this support continues throughout their life. Feedback has been captured and shared within the department to inform policy, program and service developments and improvements. Engagement with stakeholders is vital to the ongoing work of the Department. Learning from this Summit, Veterans Affairs Canada will continue to engage with stakeholders on a variety of topics in order to support Veterans and their families.



Appendix A: National Stakeholder Summit Agenda

Agenda—Day 1

Time	Description
08:30 – 09:00	Meet-and-greet session with coffee
09:00 – 09:01	O Canada
09:01 – 09:10	Algonquin blessing
09:10 – 09:15	Welcome, introduction and moment of silence for the fallen
09:15 – 09:20	Introduction of Minister
09:20 – 09:50	Introductory remarks, including introduction to Pension for Life
09:50 – 10:05	Transition panel
10:15 – 11:00	Transition: interactive group discussions
11:00 – 11:15	Health break
11:15 – 12:15	Research and mental health panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Armed Forces/Veterans Affairs Canada Joint Suicide Prevention Strategy • Veteran Suicide and Mortality Study • Mental health enhancement – Centre of Excellence on Mental Health
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:00	Service Standards review, including demo of wait-time tool
14:00 – 14:45	Service Standards review consultation session (breakout groups)
14:45 – 15:15	From idea to implementation: Why does everything take so long?
15:15 – 15:30	Health break
15:30 – 16:30	Overview of new Veterans Affairs Canada programs and benefits, and a question-and-answer period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military Veteran Family Program • Career Transition • Veterans Education and Training Benefit • Veteran Emergency Fund • Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund
16:30 – 17:30	General question-and-answer period
17:30 – 17:35	Day 1 wrap up
17:35 – 18:15	Reception



Agenda—Day 2

Time	Description
08:30 – 09:00	Meet-and-greet session with coffee
09:00 – 09:05	Welcome to day 2
09:05 – 09:45	Veteran homelessness panel
09:55 – 10:30	Veterans homelessness discussion (breakout groups)
10:30 – 10:45	Health break
10:45 – 11:25	Pension for Life: Demo of guided web form and status tracker
11:25 – 12:00	Communication and engagement (breakout groups)
12:00 – 13:15	Lunch
13:15 – 14:00	Question-and-answer period, and open forum
14:00	Summit closing



Appendix B: Participating Organizations

Stakeholders

31 Canadian Brigade Group Wellness Board
32 Canadian Brigade Group Wellness Board
39 Canadian Brigade Group Wellbeing Network
Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones (AVA)
Afghanistan Veterans Association of Canada (AVAC)
Andeamus
Armed Forces Pensioners'/Annuitants' Association of Canada
Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS)
Brave and Broken
Can Praxis
Canada Company
Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association (CAV)
Canadian Army Veterans (Motorcycle Units) (CAV)
Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping (CAVUNP)
Caregivers Brigade
Canadian Corps of Commissionaires
Canadian Institute for Military & Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

Canadian Naval Air Group
Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association (CPVA)
Canadian Psychological Association
Canadian Veterans Advocacy (CVA)
Career Edge
Challenge Factory: Veterans Research Study
Cockrell House
End Homelessness
Helmets to Hardhats
Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association (HKVCA)
It's Just 700
Korea Veterans Association of Canada (KVAC)
Military Family Resource Centres (MFRC)
Military Family Services
Mood Disorders Society of Canada
National Association of Federal Retirees (FSNA)
National Council of Veteran Associations (NCVA)
NATO Veterans Organization of Canada (NVOC)
Paws Fur Thoughts (service dogs)
Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre



Persian Gulf Veterans

Prince's Operation Entrepreneur

RESPECT

Royal Canadian Air Force Association of
Canada

Royal Canadian Legion Dominion Command
(RCL)

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Veterans'
Association (RCMPVA)

Shaping Purpose

Spartan Wellness

The Canadian Military and Veterans Families
Leadership Circle (linked to Vanier Institute of
the Family)

True Patriot Love Foundation (TPL)

University of Alberta (Family Gerontology)

Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs

Vanier Institute of the Family

Veterans Emergency Transition Services (VETS
Canada)

Veterans Transition Network, National
Operations Director

Veterans UN-NATO Canada

VeteransCanada.ca

VeteranVoice.info

Wounded Warriors Canada (WWC)

Ministerial Advisory Groups

Advisory Group on Families

Care and Support Advisory Group

Commemoration Advisory Group

Mental Health Advisory Group

Policy Advisory Group

Service Excellence Advisory Group

Government

Canadian Armed Forces

Department of National Defence, Canadian Armed
Forces

Department of National Defence/ Canadian Armed
Forces Ombudsman

Department of Finance

Department of Justice

Minister of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Minister of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Veterans Ombudsman

Privy Council Office

Public Service Commission of Canada

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Union of Veterans Affairs Employees

Veterans Affairs Canada

Veterans Review Appeal Board



Appendix C: Regional Summit Outcomes

Transition

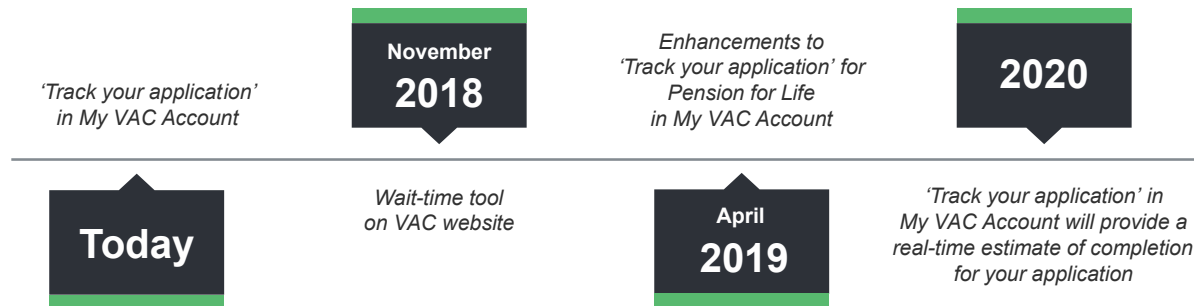
Transition outcomes:

- Eliminate the duplication of efforts between Veterans Affairs Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces to make things simpler for Veterans and members.
- Identify a network of local resources that can reach out to Veterans and assist them during the transition process.
- Inclusion of families is key throughout the entire transition process. Ensure early involvement to maximize outcomes for the transitioning member.



Appendix D: Wait-Time Tool Presentation

Timeline



Initial version planned for release in **November 2018**

Will be available on **veterans.gc.ca**

This tool will:

- Display **current average wait times** for Veterans Affairs Canada programs and services
- Be **updated weekly**
- Provide the **same information** that is provided by phone

Present (2012–2018)

- Veterans Affairs Canada service standards updated yearly
- Wait times available by phone
- Veterans want more information at their fingertips

November 2018

- Average wait times updated weekly
- Wait times available on veterans.gc.ca and by phone
- Transparent, current and reliable information available to everyone



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Appendix E: From Idea to Implementation— Parliamentary Reporting Cycle and Lapsed Funds Presentation

Where do proposals come from?

Stakeholder engagement

- Advisory groups, stakeholder events, meetings, roundtables, etc.

Speech from the throne

- Sets the Government's broad policy and legislative agenda and key priorities

Mandate letters

- Outlines the Prime Minister's expectations for individual ministers

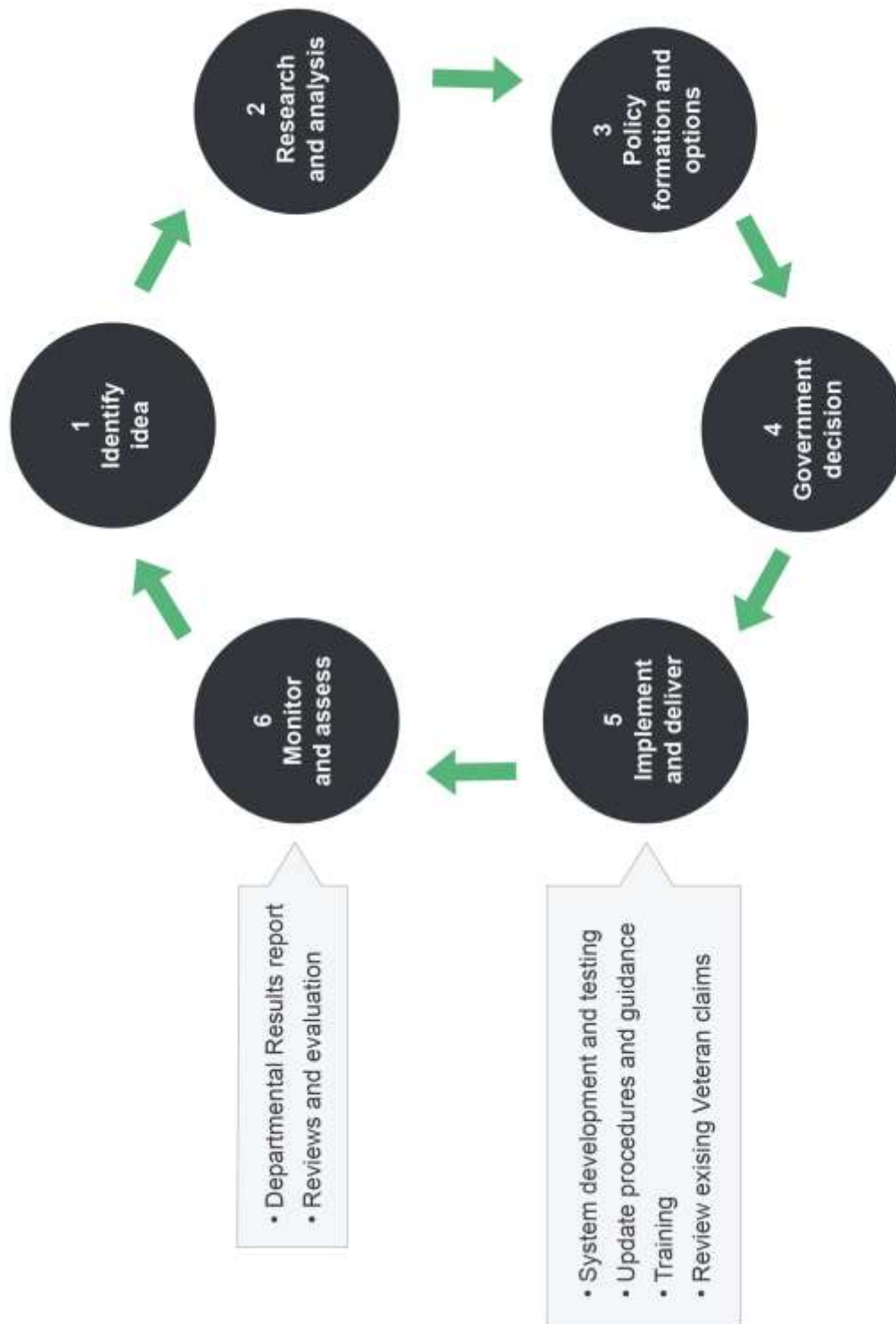
The Department

- Research, audits, evaluations, policy development

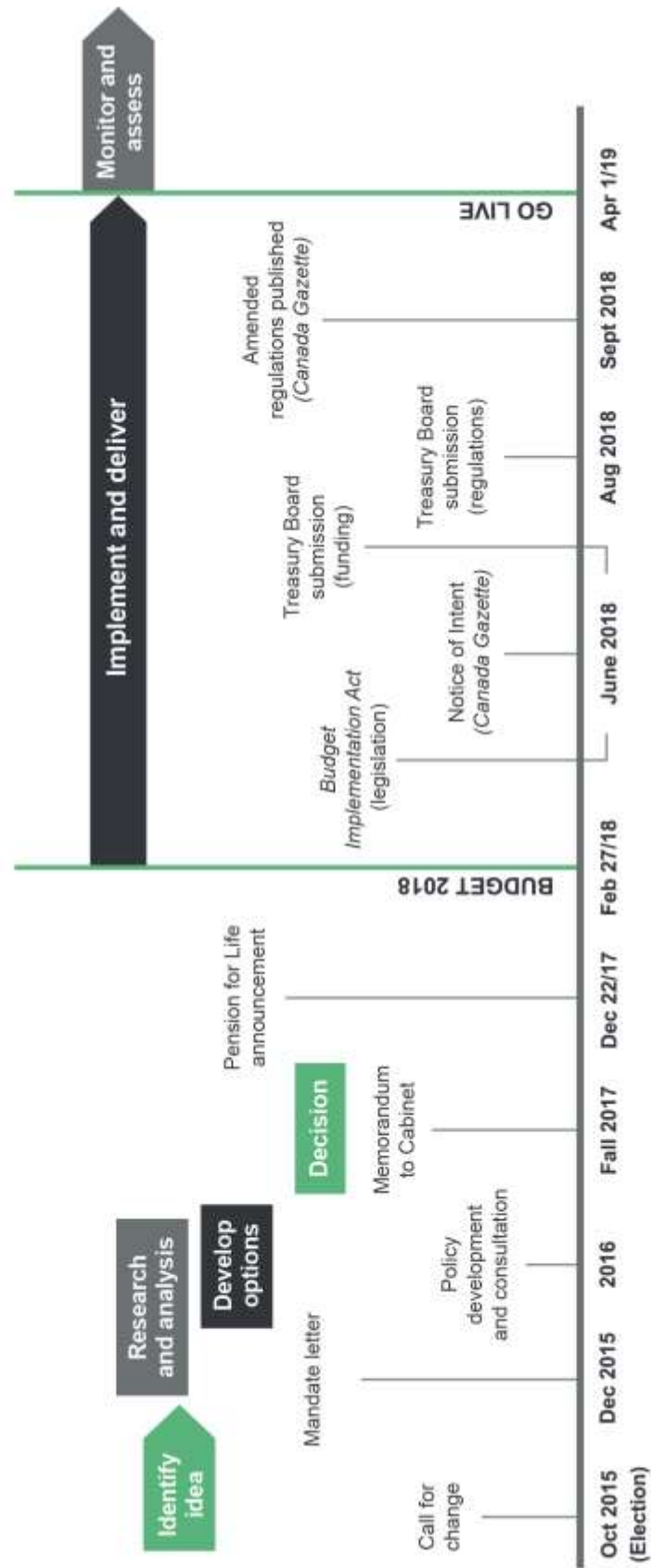
Federal budget

- Outlines the Government's fiscal priorities

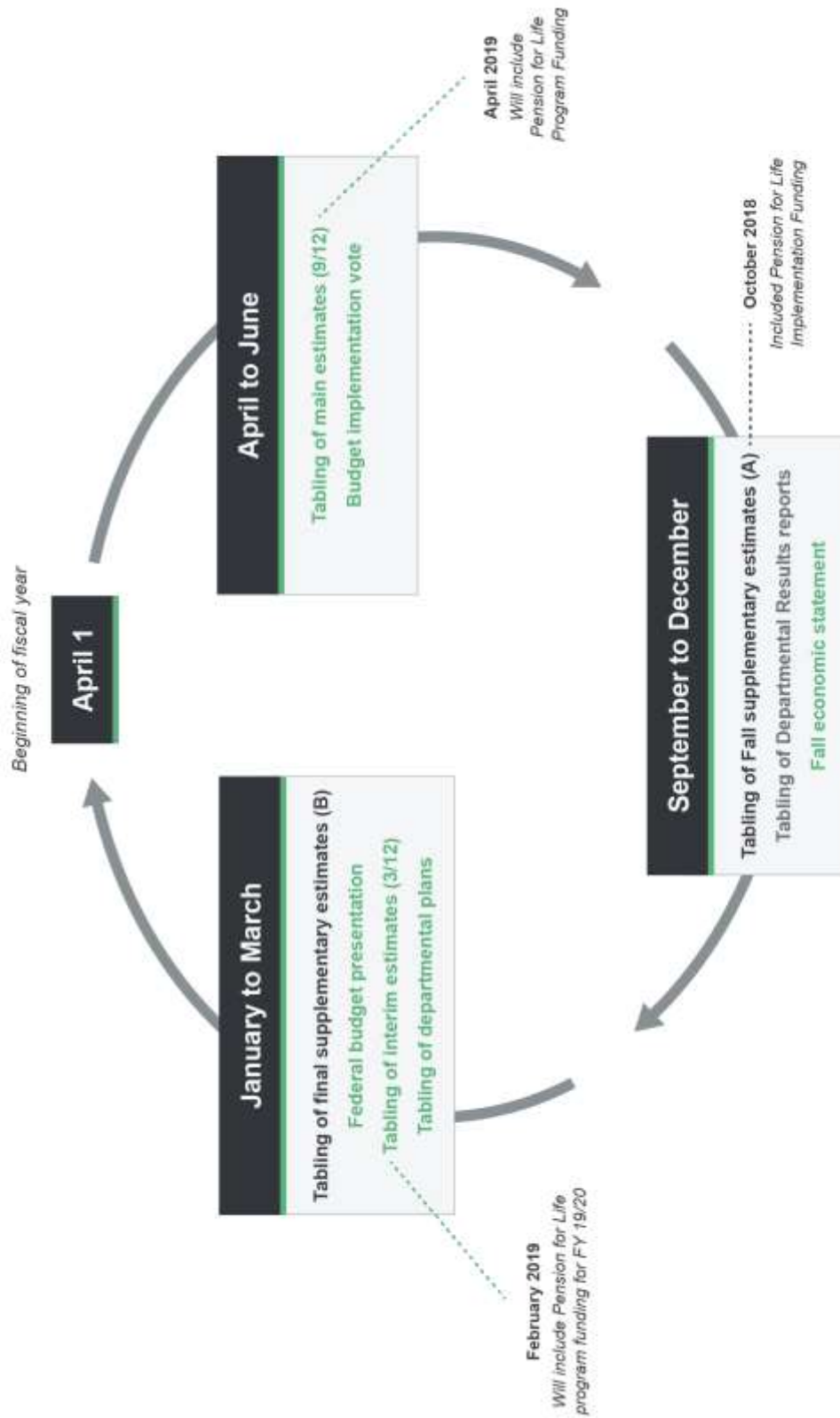
Pension for Life: From idea to implementation



Pension for Life: From idea to implementation



Parliamentary Reporting Cycle



Why does Veterans Affairs Canada lapse funding?

Approximately 93% of the Department's budget represents payments to Veterans, their families and other program recipients.

Veterans Affairs Canada program funding is:

- Quasi-statutory to be used only for the purpose intended. Veteran program benefits and services are:
 - Non-discretionary, demand-driven and based on need or eligibility;
 - Updated annually based on a forecast of client demand and related expenditures to ensure availability of funding;
 - Flexible to allow for changes in demand regardless of the number of Veterans who come forward to receive the benefits to which they are entitled; and
 - Linked to the Government's investment in Veterans ongoing programs by ensuring any remaining allocation at year end does not impact the funds available in subsequent years to meet the needs of Veterans and their families.

	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Quasi-statutory budget	\$3.3 billion	\$3.5 billion	\$4.6 billion
Quasi-statutory expenditures	\$3.2 billion	\$3.4 billion	\$4.4 billion
Remaining allocation	\$70.7 million	\$111.8 million	\$138 million
% of quasi-statutory budget unspent at year end	2.14%	3.19%	3.02%

Appendix F: Veterans Affairs Canada New Programs and Benefits Presentation

Veteran Family Program

The Veteran Family Program supports medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces members, medically released Veterans and their families.

- The suite of transition support programs and services under the Veteran Family Program was designed to ease transition and support the health and well-being of families during transition.
- In October 2015, the Veteran Family Program was launched as a pilot at seven Military Family Resource Centres.
- Budget 2017 announced the expansion of the Veteran Family Program to all 32 Military Family Resource Centres across Canada and included access to the Military Family Services Program.
- Included is access to on-site services at Military Family Resource Centres, on-line services at CAFconnection.ca, and the Family Information Line.

Career Transition Services

Career Transition Services ensure members, Veterans, survivors, spouses, and common-law partners are provided with the skills and tools that will allow them to transition successfully to the civilian workforce:

- Expansion of current eligibility that now extends to Canadian Armed Forces members, spouses, common-law partners and survivors;
- Tailored career transition support by those who understand military culture;
- Lifetime access for Veterans and survivors; and
- Simplification of the application process.

Education and Training Benefit

The Education and Training Benefit provides education and training to ensure Veterans are satisfied with their main job or activity, including employment. It:

- Provides up to \$80,000 to assist Veterans in achieving educational or career goals;
- Provides up to \$5,000 for short-term courses for personal development;
- Offers funding for formal programs that result in a degree, diploma, designation or certificate; and
- Covers tuition, course materials, and some incidentals and living expenses.

Veteran Emergency Fund

The Emergency Fund is a mechanism for Veterans Affairs Canada to provide support to Veterans and their families in times of urgent need.

- Short-term support mechanism while other longer-term support arrangements are made.
- Decisions to be made and payments issued within 24-48 hours.
- Eligible expenses include food, clothing, shelter or housing, and medical care.
- Fast flexible funding to help Veterans and their families who find themselves in an unexpected emergency.

Veterans and Family Well-Being Fund

The Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund provides grants and contributions to private, public or academic organizations to conduct research and implement initiatives and projects that support the well-being of Veterans and their families.

- Provides \$3 million in grants and contributions per year to support the creation of innovative services, supports and projects to help Veterans make smoother transitions to their lives after service.
- Veterans Affairs Canada has selected 21 organizations to receive funding this year. A total of 155 applications were received during the application period.
- Selected organizations focus on important issues for Veterans and their families such as homelessness, mental health, and family well-being.



Appendix G: Regional Summit Outcomes: Veteran Homelessness

Veteran homelessness outcomes:

- Create a network and community of supports and emergency health professionals for homeless Veterans.
- Homeless Veterans or Veterans in crisis require access to affordable housing, be it hotels, apartments or shelters.
- Develop lists of regional or local services and organizations who can help address homelessness.



Appendix H: Regional Summit Outcomes: Communication and Engagement

Communication and engagement outcomes:

- Develop a consistent process when sharing Veterans Affairs Canada information with stakeholders and do so in a timely fashion when there is a change in a program or policy.
- Explore alternative ways to communicate messages with Veterans, as not all Veterans are online and using the My VAC Account.
- Continue to hold face-to-face communications as this is key to many Veterans and Veteran groups.

