

After the Sea of Goodwill Conceptual Framework

Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Chairman's Office of Reintegration: *Veterans / Families / Communities*

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Purpose

This document provides a conceptual framework for the national structure that we called for in our white paper, *After the Sea of Goodwill: A Collective Approach to Veteran Reintegration*. It provides a conceptual governance structure and protocols to coordinate national, state, regional, and local collective engagement and services provided by public and private entities in support of military veterans and their families. This document is theoretical. Nothing within is intended to be directive. Instead, we provide this document as a baseline to support a more detailed discussion about crafting a national veteran's consortium framework.

Organizational Overview

For the purposes of this paper, we refer to the proposed national veteran's consortium as the After the Sea of Goodwill Community (ASOG Community). In its ideal form, the ASOG Community would be a public-private partnership that strives to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families throughout the United States. The ASOG community may involve veteran-serving organizations (VSO), philanthropic organizations, corporations, other private-sector stakeholders and federal, state, and local government representatives that could, on a voluntary basis, foster functional cooperation and cross-sector collaboration, increase awareness, align activities, and allocate collective resources among participating organizations in order to ensure the successful reintegration of veterans back into civilian society.¹

ASOG Vision

The ASOG Community would provide a nation-wide network of collective engagement and collaboration that connects all veterans and their families to the support and opportunities that they need to prosper in civilian life. We envision a networked no-wrong-door capacity for any veteran or military family organization.

ASOG Community Mission

The ASOG mission would be to establish a nation-wide public and private collective impact network that identifies, marshals, and aligns available data, resources, networks, activities, and services in order to create efficient access and delivery of these programs to the nation's veterans and their families.

ASOG Community Principles

As a nation, we cannot meet our full potential in reintegrating veterans and their families back into civilian society unless the military, government, non-profits, veteran-serving organizations, and private partners collaborate around a mutual agenda and *partner* to address the challenges veterans face in reintegration.

There is a 'spectrum of need' that veterans have following military service. Regardless of where their needs lie on this spectrum – whether simple, severe, or somewhere in-between -- all veterans and their

¹ For a discussion on the challenges of aligning self-interests and collective interests, see the work by Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965). In this seminal classic, the author argues that "selective incentives" are necessary to galvanize and mobilize certain groups to work collectively for a common good.

families represent *civic assets with tremendous potential* to continue leading and serving in our nation's communities, schools, corporations, small businesses, and government after their military service.

We seek to create a “no wrong door” network of capacity and cooperation through which veterans and their families can access opportunities and/or assistance. Through the ASOG Community, organizations should have increased knowledge of the system of care and support in order to assist in connecting veterans and their families to the most appropriate resources.

Prerequisites for Success

There are three prerequisites for successful implementation of the ASOG Community: an *effective convener*, a *support staff*, and *funding*. The convener must be a trusted and neutral organization or individual who garners the necessary respect and confidence of the myriad public and private stakeholders whose participation is required to create the ASOG Community. A skilled support staff is required to “plan, manage and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communication support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly.”² This support staff could be established as a distinct non-profit, or alternatively could be comprised of a mission-specific project staff within the organizational construct of an existing non-profit, business or philanthropic organization. To provide the resources necessary to launch, manage, and execute the ASOG Community's mission, a significant financial investment from veteran supporting donors would be required.

ASOG Community Objectives

Establish a shared agenda and strategy that align member organization's activities and the allocation of resources around the achievement of shared objectives and outcomes.

Employ an *integrated network* to establish reliable lines of communication that allow disparate and similar organizations to share methods and data as well as to conduct warm-handoffs of veterans and military families in need.

Foster functional cooperation to develop strategies, share information; promote similar efforts; pursue joint endeavors; share successful techniques; streamline the allocation of resources and services between local, state, and national organizations and local, state, and federal agencies; and to create a collective vision that fosters sustained cooperation.

Facilitate *cross-sector collaboration* to achieve horizontal integration between functions and to conduct “warm handovers” of veterans in need to the right organization at the right time.

Share planning and programmatic responsibilities, data, and best-practices in order to create a “no wrong door” network of capacity and cooperation through which veterans and their families can access opportunities and/or assistance.

² John Kania and Mark Kramer, “Collective Impact,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Winter 2011), 40, http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact (accessed August 23, 2014).

ASOG Community Organizational Structure

The following example ASOG Community organizational structure would be refined through stakeholder input that establishes the best means to attain the ASOG Mission, Principles, and Objectives. It is comprised of an advisory board, steering committee, support staff, working groups, a general body of members from the public and private sectors that are committed to the community's mission, principles, and objectives, and a virtual network that would enable effective networking, data-sharing, planning, and collaboration.

Collective Impact: An Example

A successful example of a similar large membership-based organization that operates in communities across the nation is the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). NVOAD was founded in response to the challenges many disaster organizations experienced following Hurricane Camille. Up until that time, the many public and private organizations that served disaster survivors operated independently of one another and as a result, relief services were not coordinated and delivered haphazardly. NVOAD was formed in 1970 to better coordinate responses, more effectively serve disaster survivors and their communities, and to provide as a forum for sharing knowledge and coordinating resources.³

Steering Committee

A steering committee would provide the vision, direction, and governance of ASOG Community activities by retaining executive decision making authority. Additional responsibilities of the steering committee include establishing and refining the community's strategy, goals, and objectives; meeting quarterly; issuing reports; facilitating collaboration among working groups; submitting policy recommendations; and planning and executing annual meetings. This steering committee would also serve as an appellate board, where members could bring grievances and/or issues to the committee for decision and action.

Steering committee members would be appointed by majority vote of the inaugural general body and would be comprised of the following:

- Three (3) non-profit representatives (1 national-level, 1 state-level, and 1 community-level)
- Three (3) VSO representatives (1 national-level, 1 state-level, and 1 community-level)
- Three (3) corporate representatives
- One (1) Chairperson for each working group.

Steering committee members would serve for two-year terms, be elected on an annual basis, and not be subject to term limits. For the inaugural steering committee, one half of the committee would serve a one-year term in order to ensure continuity between elections. The steering committee would be led by a chairperson that is selected annually by a steering committee majority vote. The steering committee chairperson would serve as chair for a one-year period.

³ National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, <http://www.nvoad.org/> (accessed November 5, 2014).

The steering committee would meet quarterly in person or via video-teleconference in order to conduct routine business and coordinate the efforts of working groups and members.

The steering committee would meet annually to review and renew community strategy, working group objectives and progress.

Managing Director & Staff

A managing director, who reports to the steering committee, would lead the community support staff. The support staff would manage and facilitate planning; coordinate logistical, communication, administrative, marketing, and fundraising support; collect and analyze data, and facilitate community reporting.

Working Groups

The ASOG Community would foster functional cooperation among organizations across the nation, which in turn would lead to a more navigable system of support for veterans and their families. This would be accomplished in part through the creation of functional working groups that would utilize the expertise and perspectives of participating organizations.

Functional working groups may include, but are not limited to:

- Employment
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Networking
- Housing
- Education
- Families
- Benefits
- Legal / Finance
- Philanthropy
- Service / Volunteerism
- Community Collaboration
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Analysis & Research
- Data Sharing
- Policy.

Each working group would be led by a chairperson who is selected by the members of the working group via majority vote. Working group membership may include representatives from national, state, and community-level organizations. Working group chairpersons would be accountable to the steering committee, serve a two-year term, and retain voting privileges within the steering committee.

Working group chairpersons would be responsible for:

- Organizing and scheduling quarterly meetings
- Developing and implementing annual working group strategies and objectives
- Facilitating discussion and calling for and recording votes during working group meetings
- Report to the steering committee regarding working group efforts and issues to be addressed by the steering committee
- Providing reports and updates to the steering committee on actions and progress quarterly
- Providing policy recommendations annually to the steering committee
- Collaborating with adjacent ASOG Community working groups to ensure cross-sector alignment of effort
- Recruiting new membership
- Updating the working group's internal collaboration page on the ASOG Community Portal
- Coordinating/maintaining working group focus on objectives and direction of the working group's and steering committee's annual strategy and objectives.

Working groups would meet quarterly and determine the most effective structure and means by which to accomplish their goals and objectives while maintaining awareness of ongoing work by participating organizations and addressing targeted issues.

Members

Membership in the ASOG Community would be open to all local, county, state, and federal entities, non-profits, large corporations, and small businesses that provide services, programs, and resources to veterans and their families.

ASOG Community membership would be effective upon submission of a signed, non-binding ASOG Community Memorandum of Understanding to, and receipt by, the steering committee.

Membership in the ASOG Community would garner voting privileges during working group meetings, access and full rights to the ASOG Community portal, and participation in working groups of interest and expertise.

Full membership could be divided into two tiers based on level of participation, total organization budget, size of organization, years of experience in the veteran space, as well as other factors. The steering committee would decide specific tiered membership criteria.

Affiliate membership could be extended to interested entities that do not provide specific services, programs, and resources tailored to the veteran community, but provide support and participate in programs associated with and/or sponsored by ASOG Community members and organizations. Affiliate members may have limited access to the ASOG Community portal, provide donated services to associated veteran communities, assist full member organizations, and may participate in working groups.

ASOG Community members may withdraw membership at any time during their membership upon written notice of withdrawal from the ASOG Community provided to the steering committee.

The steering committee may revoke an organization's ASOG Community membership by a majority vote.

ASOG Community members would be expected to pledge the following member organizational principles:

- Provide quarterly updates to their membership regarding organizational contributions and involvement with the ASOG Community
- Actively participate in their working groups by attending meetings, offering expertise and insights, and whenever possible, contributing resources to the collaborative projects of the working groups
- Confirm or update at least monthly on the ASOG Community portal current organizational information regarding services, hours, locations, and events. When possible, members would use the ASOG Community portal to make and accept referrals from other organizations
- Work collaboratively with one another to advance the ASOG Community mission as well as to increase the efficiency and efficacy of programs for veterans and their families.

ASOG Community Portal

The ASOG Community would operate a web-based collaboration portal.⁴ This portal would:

- Facilitate veteran identification
- Provide case management tools
- Provide Community and working group collaboration tools
- Map services and increase awareness of events within the network
- Provide the capability to conduct network referrals and handovers
- Provide data and document storage, sharing, and transport
- Allow for public services searches.

Data sharing agreements would be required between ASOG Community and would be approved by the majority vote of the steering committee.

The ASOG Community portal would ensure the protection of all individual service members', veterans', and family members' personally identifiable information and personal identifiable health information in accordance with all federal and state privacy laws.

⁴ For an example of a collaboration portal, see The National Autism Resource & Information Center, under the auspice of The Arc, the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The web site for the Autism NOW Center provides high quality resources and information in core areas across the lifespan to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental disabilities, their families, caregivers, and professional in the field, <http://autismnow.org/> (accessed November 5, 2014).

The ASOG Community portal would allow for registered and public users:

- Registered users would be comprised of these ASOG Community full and affiliate members who are providing services to veterans and their families
- Public users would typically be veterans and their families seeking information about available benefits and services.

Registered and public users of the ASOG Community portal would have their access revoked by the steering committee for violating the user agreement, e.g., for improper use or for not using the portal for official ASOG Community purposes. The steering committee may revoke access to the portal with a majority vote.

ASOG Community Annual Calendar (Notional)

Recommended Annual Requirements:

- ASOG Community Annual Conference
- Publication of ASOG Community Policy Recommendations to Congress and the White House
- Publication of ASOG Community Strategy
- Publication of ASOG report to membership.

Recommended Quarterly Requirements:

- Steering Committee meetings
- Working Group meetings
- Working Group updates to the Steering Committee.

Recommended Implementation Actions

Formation Advisory Committee: A small group of key stakeholders would refine the ASOG Community concept, governance structure, and implementation plan prior to the initial call to action convening of the invited ASOG Community membership.

Functional Leader Consultation: Following refinement of the ASOG Community concept by the Advisory Committee, potential Functional Working Group leaders would be consulted to provide their input, further refine the conceptual framework, and secure their participation.

Convene & Call To Action: At the call to action convening, a broad group of stakeholders from the local, state, regional and national levels would be convened to review the ASOG Community vision, objectives and concept. These stakeholders would then be challenged to volunteer their participation in the community and commit to establishing the network and contributing to the collaboration.