

Office of Military and Veterans Legal Assistance Advisory Board Meeting

Washington State Attorney General's Office

Tuesday, December 9th, 2025, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Via Zoom & In-Person

Attendees:

AGO Staff:

- Mariah Hanley (Co-Facilitator)
- Ian Anderson (Co-Facilitator)
- Sumayo Hassan, AI Policy Analyst (Minutes)

Advisory Board:

Voting Members **Quorum reached**

- Beth Leonard, WA State Office of Civil Legal Aid
- Caesar Kalinowski, WA State Veterans Bar Association
- Paul Cruz, WA State Department of Veterans Affairs
- Kevin Devine, VA Puget Sound / US Department of Veterans Affairs (Alt)
- Ned Gignoux, VA Puget Sound / US Department of Veterans Affairs
- Joyce Diaz, WA State Bar Association
- SFC Ra-Sha Sanford, Washington Army National Guard
- Heidi Bode, LAW Advocates
- Marcos Zuniga, NWJP
- Michael Terasaki, Pro Bono Council
- Cayce Hall, Tacoma Probono

Non-voting Members & Guests:

- None

11:01am Meeting brought to order by Ian; agenda presented; introductions

11:07am Ian introduced the September 2025 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes for discussion and approval

- No changes requested.
- Caesar moved to approve; Paul seconded.
- All voted in favor to approve.

11:10am Mariah Provided a recap of 2025 Q3 Data

- Discussed Q3 requests, counties with most activity, and top legal issues.
- Rural counties & tribal communities are OMVLA's 2026 outreach priorities.
- 80 attorneys signed up to provide OMVLA pro bono services.

11:18am Ian and Mariah discussed 2025 Q3 events and upcoming events and activities

- Notable events from Q3:
 - Wills Clinic at Seattle VA on November 1st (AG Brown attended)
 - Outreach at PEER Seattle Veterans Day Recognition Event (honoring LGBTQ+ veterans) on November 11th (Ian)
 - Outreach at Thurston County Stand Down on November 6th (Ian)
 - Attorney outreach at Microsoft Pro Bono Fair on October 27th (Mariah & Ian)
 - Outreach throughout Southeast Washington in November (Mariah)
- Upcoming Events
 - Mariah presents veterans cultural competency CLE to bankruptcy lawyers on December 12th
 - OMVLA will present to King County Veterans Affinity Group on December 17th
 - Mariah will present CLE with LAMP on January 15th
 - Veterans Debt Clinic with CENTS on February 7th
 - Veterans Wills Clinic at Seattle VA in March (Date TBD)

11:22am Ian discussed Volunteer Layer Recruitment & Retention

- Our list of volunteer attorneys has reached 250 members. The AGO team is excited about the increase and are looking for new ways to continuously engage volunteers.
- Additional emphasis will be placed on finding volunteer housing attorneys to meet current needs.

11:25am Ian discussed the 2026 Meeting Schedule

- Board members agreed to continue meeting quarterly.
- Ian will send a poll of meeting dates to board members for their input.

11:29am Ian opened the floor for member updates

- Mariah discussed OMVLA's new veterans resource guide (Your Rights as a Veteran in Washington) and asked members to share with their communities.
 - A guide for servicemembers will be released early 2026.
- Additional VA legal services grant funding expected to be released in early 2026.
 - Marcos asked if bankruptcy attorneys are taking cases to completion.
 - OMVLA volunteers are expected to give up to an hour of legal advice.

- Caesar suggested OMVLA revive its online calendar of events.
- Caesar suggested sharing OMVLA data with members of the Legislature and hosting a possible work session.
- Beth suggested having Your Rights as a Veteran in Washington posted on Washington Law Help.
- Beth asked about future efforts to share results of the Legal Needs Survey.
- Joyce suggested sending the resource guide to the Alliance listserv.
- Paul suggested reaching out to Steve Gill at WDVA for tribal outreach.
- Ned shared info about our plans for the Seattle VA Wills Clinic in March.

11:44am Ian opened the meeting to public comment

- No members of public were present.

11:45am Ian adjourned the meeting