



**Office of Military & Veteran Legal Assistance
Advisory Committee**

AGENDA

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026
11 AM - 12 PM**

In Person: 800 Fifth Ave, Ste 2000, Seattle, WA 98104

Online: <https://atg-wa.zoom.us/j/83955486962?pwd=rkrNbNm5Vxqjw2Obu89nVP2K4I3gu.1>

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| <u>Objectives:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Discuss status of past, current, and upcoming projects• Discuss ways to support each other and this community | | |
| 1. | Initial matters <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome & Introductions• Approve Meeting Minutes – December 2025 | 11:00 a.m. |
| 2. | Recent Activities & Summary of Last Year <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2025 Year End Recap• Events & Activities – Recap and Upcoming | 11:15 a.m. |
| 3. | Roundtable / Community Partner Updates & Events | 11:45 a.m. |
| 4. | Public Comment | 11:55 a.m. |
| 5. | Adjourn | 12:00 p.m. |

OMVLA ANNUAL REPORT: 2025

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, OMVLA:

- Assisted 593 veterans, service members, and their families
- Recruited 142 new volunteer attorneys
- Attended over a dozen community events, trainings, or meetings

Year in Review



We received **593 requests** for legal help

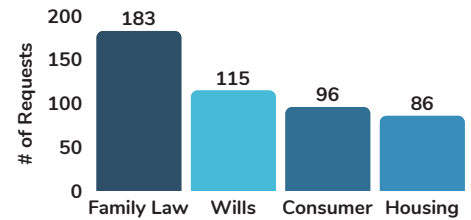


Average FPL for community members is **250%**



69.7% of the cases we sent to pro bono attorneys were accepted for assistance

Top 4 Legal Needs by Category



2024 Comparisons



Percent of **family law cases** is **nearly identical** year over year (30% in 2025; 32% in 2024)



Population statistics **unchanged** (84% veterans in 2025; 83% in 2024)



More requests for **consumer law help** (16% of requests in 2025; 11.5% in 2024)



Fewer requests from **rural counties** (17% of requests in 2025; 22% in 2024)

Volunteer Recruitment and Relationships

142 new pro bono attorney volunteers

- Contacted **more than 3,900** attorneys
- Distributed Attorney Policy manual
- Sought feedback from 90 volunteer attorneys

We Recruited...

44 consumer law attorneys
38 wills and estate attorneys
33 family law attorneys
14 consumer law attorneys

We also recruited new landlord-tenant, VA benefits, and healthcare attorneys!

Many attorneys practice in more than one area.

Community Member Story

Mr. C is an elderly veteran and his wife's caregiver. They live in a rural area behind a locked WA DNR gate, but the local locksmith would not provide Mr. C with copies of the gate key for his family and first responders. OMVLA provided Mr. C with contact information for the lock manufacturer's legal team, who called the locksmith. **Mr. C now has all the keys he needs.** He says, "Without your help, we would be on our own....my family and myself thank you sincerely for your assistance and support!"



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