



**2021 – 2024  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Dear BVA Board Members,**

**Welcome to Blinded Veterans Association's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan – our roadmap for success. This publication will introduce you to the critical elements of our strategy from top-line, overarching strategic goals or pillars to our key tactics and performance indicators that ensure we are meeting our objectives.**

**Developing this strategic plan with a holistic, top-to bottom approach took six months. The process included multiple in-depth board member, staff and stakeholder interviews, surveys, focus groups and Board sessions and calls.**

**We took this deliberate approach to ensure we present you with a strategic plan that does a lot more than collect dust on a digital shelf. Rather, our strategy integrates into our processes down to Board and employee daily action.**

**Our way forward reflects an analysis of the most critical challenges facing our Association, seeking to successfully navigate changes in our membership, funding, service delivery and engagement with the legislative process.**

**Thank you for your diligence and collaborative work on this strategic plan. Together we have identified the strategic path forward. My promise to you is to ensure this plan drives all we do as we lead the Blinded Veterans Association to fulfill our honorable mission and serve our members with excellence.**

**Respectfully,**

**Donald D. Overton, Jr.**

**Executive Director**

**Table of Contents:**

<b>Mission Vision Purpose Statements</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Summary of Four Goals/ Pillars and Measurements</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b><u>Goal #1:</u> Generate new and sustained revenue and manage expenses</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b><u>Goal #2:</u> The BVA is recognized by the VA, Government and Public as the leader in advocacy for blinded veterans and their caregivers</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b><u>Goal #3:</u> Inspire, connect and effectively engage BVA members</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b><u>Goal #4:</u> Achieve Operational Excellence at the BVA</b>	<b>Page 21</b>
<b><u>Appendix:</u> Background Information informing the Strategic Plan</b>	<b>Page 24</b>

## **Mission Vision Purpose Statements 01/30/2020**

### **Mission:**

BVA serves as ambassadors and mentors for all veterans and their families coping with sight loss.

### **Vision:**

BVA continually strives to better the lives of all who served in the Armed Forces living with sight loss through: expert advocacy, engaged membership, clear communication, and peer inspired self-reliance. Our BVA family epitomizes respect, honor, dedication and commitment to sustain a thriving, informed, patriotic and connected community.

### **Why:**

BVA is the only congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organization created for, consisting of and led by visually impaired veterans focused on the issues, advocacy and mentorship vital to all veterans and families coping with sight loss regardless of service connection.

### **Congressionally Chartered Purpose of BVA:**

- (1) to operate as a not-for-profit corporation exclusively for charitable, educational, patriotic, and civic improvement purposes;
- (2) to promote the welfare of blinded veterans so that, notwithstanding their disabilities, they may take their rightful place in the community and work with their fellow citizens toward the creation of a peaceful world;
- (3) to preserve and strengthen a spirit of fellowship among blinded veterans so that they may give mutual aid and assistance to one another; and
- (4) to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and to encourage loyalty to the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the states in which they reside.

## **Summary of Four Goals / Pillars:**

### **Goal #1: Generate new and sustained revenue and manage expenses**

Measured by: BVA's reduced operational deficit.

Baseline: \$525,000 in 2019. Reduced by 33% by July 1, 2021; 66% by July 1, 2022; and 100% by July 1, 2023.

### **Goal #2: Ensure the BVA is recognized as the leader in advocacy for blinded veterans and their caregivers by the VA, Government and Public.**

Measured by: 2021, 2022, and 2023 membership surveys, VA & Government quotes, sought opinion and public/press reports.

Baseline: 80%. 2021: 82%, 2022: 85%, 2023: 90%

### **Goal #3: Inspire, connect and effectively engage BVA members.**

Measured by: annual 2021, 2022 and 2023 Overall Satisfaction rating in Annual Membership survey. As well as Annual Conference, Regional member involvement, Calls to Veterans Service Program, OPS participation and Satisfaction survey

Baseline: 66.6% to 70% in 2021, 75% in 2022, 85% in 2023,

### **Goal #4: Achieve Operational Excellence at the BVA.**

Measured annually by Employee and Stakeholder surveys with questions on Communication, BVA HQ Team, Leading by Example.

Baseline: 65% 2021: 70%, 2022: 75%, 2023: 80%

## **The BVA 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan**

**Final Version: 01/01/2021**

### **Goal #1: Generate new and sustained revenue and manage expenses**

Measured by: BVA's reduced operational deficit from \$525,000 in 2019 by 33% by July 1, 2021, 66% by July 1, 2022 and 100% by July 1, 2023.

#### **1. BVA has a culture of fundraising (Dollar amounts will be set in Fundraising Plan to be developed)**

- a. Executive Director role is clearly defined with at least 50% allocated to fundraising by June 30, 2021 Responsible: Don

The key to this is:

- Hiring a Chief of Public Relations COMPLETED  
Responsible: Don
- Develop Fundraising Training Plan for ED COMPLETED  
Responsible: Don & BOD
- Execute Fundraising Training Plan for ED COMPLETED  
Responsible: Don & BOD

- b. Board, Key Staff and Regional leaders are trained in fundraising and Story Telling by 9/30/2021 Responsible Don & BOD

- Develop Board of Directors training plan  
By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don & BOD
- Schedule Board training at Spring Board meeting  
By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don & BOD
- Develop Fundraising training plan for staff  
By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don & BOD
- Develop Fundraising training plan for Regional leaders  
By June 30, 2021 Responsible: Don & BOD
- Complete BVA staff and Regional leaders training by end of 2021 Annual meeting Responsible: Don & BOD
- Create BVA Speakers Bureau for fundraising, advocacy and communication

By August 30, 2021 Responsible: Don & BOD

- c. All events including Annual Conference have and achieve fundraising, attendance, budget and engagement goals:

Goals set by March 28, 2021 and achieved by Events Lead

- d. New BVA offices reflect fundraising culture

- Public Display of: Corporate sponsors, Major Donors, Planned Gifts, Grants

By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don & HQ Directors

- e. BVA creates a Fundraising plan and presents to BVA Board at spring board meeting.

By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don

- f. As part of the Fundraising Plan, Individual, Corporate and Government Donor engagement plan developed for Thank you, recognition and engagement.

- Use Salesforce for recording all donor contact
- Personal Thank you visits for large sponsors and donors
- Thank You letters sent after donation received
- Volunteer activities identified for events

By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don & Andrea

**2. Develop corporate programs to generate \$5,000 in recurring revenue for the BVA by June 30, 2021, \$10,000 by 2022 and \$20,000 by 2023.**

- a. Work with Garrett Bolks to identify current opportunities.

By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Don & Andrea

- b. Identify 5 opportunities for recurring revenue

By August 30, 2021 Responsible: Don & Andrea

Sample opportunities include:

- I. Hearing Aides Buckingham Corporation

- II. BVA Seal of Approval
  - III. Capitol RX Pharmacy Benefits Program
  - IV. Fundraising Events (Golf, Gala... etc.)
- 
- c. Develop benefits case of partnership  
By June 1, 2021, Responsible: Don & Andrea
  - d. Develop Agreement for partnerships  
By August 30, 2021, Responsible: Don & Andrea

**3. Four BVA Regional groups raise \$10,000 annually by June 30, 2022**

- a. Identify four Regional Groups interested in fundraising and having capacity  
By May 1, 2021, Responsible: Don and District Directors
- b. Train four Regional Groups in fundraising  
By August 2021, Responsible: Don and Fundraising Committee
- c. Identify need for funds and develop case for effort  
By August 2021, Responsible: Don & Andrea
- d. Work with four Regional Groups to assist in raising \$10,000 each  
By June 2022, Responsible: Don & Fundraising Committee

**Goal #2: The BVA is recognized by the VA, Government and Public as the leader in advocacy for blinded veterans and their caregivers.**

Measured by: 2021, 2022, and 2023 membership surveys, VA & Government quotes, sought opinion and public/press reports. Baseline: 80%. 2021: 82%, 2022: 85%, 2023: 90%

**1. BVA rates and seeks to improve the services to veterans who are blind from the VA/ DOD/ Governmental and Non-Governmental Associations.**

- a. Update the Veteran Care Review process to ensure blinded veterans are receiving best care  
By 2021 Annual Board meeting in August. Responsible: Jim
  - Collaboration: The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) or the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP)
  - Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), American Legion, VFW do VAMC site visit reviews and report to VHA.
  - Develop timely standard format with consistent reporting requirements and time lines for submissions and responses from BRS, VHA, or VBA.
- b. Define and publish “best practices” guidelines and have it accepted by the VA  
By 2021 Annual Board meeting in August. Responsible: Jim/ VSP Committee, and BRS BVA Committee
- c. BVA documents effective and consistent regional engagements with blind rehabilitation services employees at VA Medical (VIST/BROS) and produces quarterly report  
By 2021 Annual Board meeting in August and quarterly afterwards. Responsible: Jim / Local regional group BVA officers

- d. BVA effectively engages Chief of VA eye clinics in BRC/VISOR locations  
Ongoing. Responsible: Don, Jim, Wade
- e. BVA effectively engages Sec. VA and Deputy VA  
Ongoing. Responsible: Jim
- f. Meetings with Under Secretary Health and Clinical Service Chiefs VHA  
Ongoing. Responsible: Jim

**2. BVA identifies, advocates and mobilizes efforts for the blinded veterans on the Hill, other Military and Veteran Service Organizations, and in medical or research communities**

- a. BVA Government Relations Director hire Assistant COMPLETED
- b. Conduct focused Hill Days with 5 - 6 BVA members annually “TAP the Hill” visits  
Ongoing. Responsible: Jim / Govt. Relations Committee.
- c. Introduce new app / OneClick Politics to allow BVA members to contact elected officials  
By February 28, 2021. Responsible: Jim
- d. Use and develop quarterly Board report on OneClick  
By March 15, 2021 and Quarterly afterwards. Responsible: Jim
- e. Develop Resolutions with BVA membership and Regional Group leaders  
By August 2021 Annual Convention. Responsible: BVA Board Members / Jim
- f. Development of Annual BVA Leadership Awards to Congressional members and government leaders by BVA for special contributions to improving rehabilitation, benefits, or research  
By March 28, 2021 and annually afterwards. Responsible: Jim

### **3. BVA supports vision research on behalf of BVA members.**

- a. Meet with BV UK to discuss “Best Practices” around Research support and engagement  
By February 28, 2021 Responsible: Tom Z
- b. Determine possible role of BVA in Research space and make recommendation to BVA Board  
By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Tom Z

#### **Possible Organizations to partner with:**

1. Blind Veterans UK (BVUK)
2. Highlight cooperation with Association Researchers Vision Ophthalmology (ARVO).
3. National Alliance Eye Vision Research (NAEVR)
4. National Eye Institute NIH
5. American Academy Ophthalmology (AAO)
6. American Optometric Association (AOA)
7. DOD Vision Research Program (VRP)
8. VHA Office Research & Development
9. Mississippi State University Rehabilitation Research Training Institute (MSURRTIC)
10. Caregiver.Com and other Caregiver Organizations

#### **Possible ideas for role of BVA in Research:**

1. Provides updates in various newsletters and web stories
2. Provide BVA speakers at events
3. Engage BVA members in research opportunities
4. Cooperate with vision research organizations on advocating for both national and international research highlighting military vision trauma, degenerative eye diseases, promoting research and long-term surveillance
5. Inform BVA membership on the concept of grassroots efforts for policy change in government to improve or expand VA benefits or health care programs for disabled

6. Provide breaking news briefs via the legislative contacts email list to board members and membership
7. Develop specific briefing materials on the regulatory and legislative processes to be presented to BVA Board/ staff and to BVA regional group membership
8. Provide legislative email alerts, Bulletin updates, and expand on social media forums
9. Provide press interviews or info to news media on BVA issues/ stories about blinded veterans and/or caregivers
10. Educate and train BVA regional group must help “amplify the programs and services and strong advocacy work of BVA in the veteran space

### **Goal #3: Inspire, connect and effectively engage BVA members**

Measured by: annual 2021, 2022 and 2023 membership survey.

*(This will be measured by Overall Satisfaction rating increasing from 2019 base of 66.6% to 70% in 2021, 75% in 2022, 85% in 2023, Annual Conference, Regional member involvement, Calls to Veterans Service Program, OPS participation and Satisfaction surveys)*

#### **1. Hire new BVA Chief of Public Relations leader**

Completed. Responsible: Don

#### **2. BVA creates “customer intimacy” through effective centralized data management and communication**

##### **a) Develop External Communication Plan**

By June 30, 2021 Responsible: Stuart (with support from Communications Committee, OPS, Fundraising Committee)

Ideas to be included:

- Annual Conference President Reception State of the Union presentation highlighting BVA successes
- Establish ability to survey for satisfaction after Annual Conference, Regional member involvement, Calls to Veterans Service Program and OPS participation, Events and for Staff
- Including all communications platforms and methods: Print, digital, social media, email, personal, and development. Using quarterly or monthly messages

##### **b) Execution of External Communication Plan**

Beginning July 1, 2021 and ongoing. Responsible: Stuart

- c) Database: BVA maintain accurate easily accessed centralized membership data base of all BVA membership.
  - i. BVA National work with Regions to review Membership list monthly for additions, death and transfers  
By June 2021, Responsible: Maria / Education Committee
  - ii. BVA has a fully integrated CRM with Salesforce  
By December 2021, Responsible: Don & Andrea
  - iii. Develop method to measure quality of database  
By June 2021, Responsible: Don & Andrea
  
- d) Provide BVA members with outstanding Written Communication
  - i. BVA publishes Award winning Bulletin and Newsletter publications  
By June 2021, Responsible: Stuart
  - ii. Executive Director updates continue with “transparency and not sanitized”
    - 1. Consider Bi weekly or monthly
    - 2. Include staff input
    - 3. Make available to general membership and staff  
By Ongoing, Responsible: Don
  - iii. Regional newsletters implemented and Regional leadership engaged in BVA personal communications  
By June 2021, Responsible: Membership committee
  
- e) Establish regular teleconferences based on different programs that invite BVA members to engage with BVA
  - i. Determine groups and programs that would be valuable to members
  - ii. Demonstrate relevance to membership
  - iii. Offer consistently
  - iv. Offer training  
By October 2021, Responsible: Education Committee

- f) BVA National Social Media is effective and measurable
- i. Determine best measurements for social media effort  
Ideas include:
    - # followers on Facebook, shares and posts
    - Emails opened and forwarded
    - Unique website visits and page 2 clicks
  - ii. Use video in addition to audio
- By June 30, 2021, Responsible: Stuart

- g) Website: BVA has dynamic, updated website available to Members to provide thorough information and self-help assistance
- a. Areas of the website to be addressed are:
    1. Membership application
    2. Finances and 990
    3. All Membership Applications
    4. List of District and Regional Officers and Contacts
    5. Ability to identify Regional and District contacts by zip code
    6. Committee rosters
    7. BVA 2021 Strategic Plan
    8. Place to share video stories
    9. Donor/sponsor/partner recognition
    10. Events Calendar
- By June 30, 2021. Responsible: Public Relations Committee

**3. Operation Peer Support is expanded nationally and regionally to engage more BVA members**

- a) Eight to ten annual national OPS program events offered
- By June 30, 2021. Responsible: OPS Committee

b) OPS Committee develops training of OPS events and “best practices” for Regions

By June 30, 2021. Responsible: OPS Committee

c) By 2023 all Districts are having one OPS program per year

By June 2023. Responsible: OPS Committee

**4. BVA 2021 events are member engaging, revenue generating and high quality**

2021 Annual National Convention – reception, Invite members, major donors, affiliate members

Memorial Day

White Cane Day

Blinded Veterans Day

**5. Strong regional system and engagement with members regionally**

**a) Decentralize the Veterans Service Program**

i. Develop plan to decentralize the Veterans Service Program.

By March 15, 2021,

Responsible: Jim / Resource Committee

ii. Develop metrics to measure effectiveness of a decentralized VSP

By March 15, 2021

Responsible: Jim / Resource Committee

iii. Board Approval of decentralization plan and metrics

By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Jim

iv. Execute and Measure effectiveness of new plan for Veterans Service Program.

Ongoing. Responsible: Jim

- v. Announce new plan for Veterans Service Program at the 2021 Annual BVA Convention
- b) Reestablish Pilot Regional training including Fundraising, Public Relations, Networking and working with the local VA to strengthen regions
- i. Develop Regional Training manual  
By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Education Committee
  - ii. Develop plan to train Regions on effective practices  
By March 28, 2021 Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group
  - iii. Development metrics to measure effectiveness of Regional training pilots with a cost benefit analysis  
By April 30, 2021 Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group
  - iv. Select two Districts and Regional Groups in the selected Districts to pilot Regional training program  
By or before Annual Convention, Responsible: Education Committee
  - v. Begin pilot Regional training at Annual Conference.  
Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group
  - vi. Measure effectiveness of two Regional training pilots regarding follow up actions  
By March 2022 Board meeting. Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group
  - vii. Identify additional District(s) and Regional groups for pilot expansion

By March 2022 Board meetings. Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group

viii. Expand Regional training Annual Conference 2022. Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group

ix. With success of Regional training initiative, develop national expansion of initiative  
By March 2022 Board meeting. Responsible: Education Training and Membership Committee and Regional Group

## **6. Engage, Investigate and Implement additional services to BVA members and their family.**

### **a. BVA Care Givers**

i. Meet with BVAA to discuss the Care Giving initiative and their potential participation and leadership  
By February 28, 2021, Responsible: Don

*(depending on the role of the BVAA the tactics below and timeline for this strategy needs to be developed)*

- ii. Identify needs of BVA Care Givers
- iii. Identify existing resources available for Care Givers
- iv. Consider how OPS Care Givers support could be incorporated
- v. Design Care Giver Support program  
By March 15, 2021, Responsible: TBD
- vi. Present to Board for approval  
By March 30, 2020, Responsible: TBD
- vii. Launch Care Giving initiative at 2021 Annual Convention

### **b. BVA member Mental Health/Suicide Resources**

i. Identify Mental Health and Suicide data of blinded veterans

By February 28, 2021, Responsible: Women's Veterans Committee

- ii. Develop recommendation for BVA Board of best way for the BVA to assist blinded veterans considering suicide

Possible ideas:

- Provide link to resources on BVA website
- Provide phone number for BVA members
- Create Resource packet on BVA website
- Determine education resources and methods of suicide services for blinded veterans
- Provide session at Annual Convention
- Determine how to assist VA Suicide hotline to better understand blinded veterans considering suicide – training, talking with suicide caller
- “Talking Tuesday” to encourage a call to a blinded veteran

By March 15, 2021, Responsible: Jim / Women's Veterans Committee

- iii. Present to BVA Board for approval of recommendation

By March Board meeting, Responsible: Jim

- iv. Announce suicide prevention initiative at Annual Convention

By: Annual Convention, Responsible: Jim

## **7. Engage BVAA more effectively**

- i. Meet with BVAA to discuss engagement opportunities

Ideas for ways to engage the BVAA more effectively

- Have link on each organization's websites to both organizations
- Have the BVAA be on the Annual Convention planning committee
- Ask the BVAA to provide a report to BVA Board bi-annually
- Create Caregiving committee with BVA and BVAA members.

By March 15, 2021 Responsible: Tom Z

- ii. BVAA and Tom Z present recommendations in March 2021  
BVA Board meeting

By March 30, 2021 Responsible: Tom Z

- iii. Implement recommendations approved by BVA Board

By June 30, 2021 Responsible: Tom Z

## **Goal #4: Achieve Operational Excellence at the BVA**

Measured annually by Employee and Stakeholder surveys with questions on Communication, BVA HQ Team, Leading by Example.

Baseline: 65% 2021: 70%, 2022: 75%, 2023: 80%

Also measured by controlling of expenses i.e. salaries and compensation, travel, mailing costs and others

### **1. Effective Internal Communication**

- a. Weekly leadership team meetings that are under one hour, occur with or without Executive Director and can be by teleconference  
Begin by February 28, 2021 and then ongoing Responsible: Don & all Directors
- b. Monthly all staff meetings to provide updates and receive feedback.  
Begin by February 28, 2021 and then ongoing Responsible: Don & all Directors
- c. Central Calendar to show key events, birthdays, PTO, holidays, etc.  
Begin by February 28, 2021 than ongoing Responsible: Brigitte

### **2. Strong BVA HQ Team of selfless servants that cares about the mission and one another**

- a. Publicize a clear and easy to read Organizational Chart  
By February 28, 2021 Responsible: Brigitte
- b. HQ staff aligned by teams  
By February 28, 2021 Responsible: Don
- c. Publish an updated Employee Handbook annually  
By February 28, 2021 and ongoing afterwards. Responsible: Don
- d. Collaboratively develop and publish the Cultural Values of the organization

By September 30, 2021 Responsible: Don / HRi

- e. Plan calendar year HQ staff gatherings / meals around key holidays  
By February 28, 2021 Responsible: Brigitte / HRi
- f. Nominate and recognize quarterly Selfless Servant or a staff person who exemplified an organizational value  
By February 28, 2021 Responsible: Don / HRi

### **3. Strong Management through “Leading by Example” by Leaders who care**

- a. Designate one of the weekly leadership team meetings each month (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> or last) to be a Dashboard update of key BVA measurements by department  
By April 15, 2021 Responsible: Don
- b. Develop key measurement Dashboard for department updates  
By March 15, 2021 Responsible: Don
- c. Quarterly BVA Leadership team reviews the Strategic Plan to track progress  
By April 2021 have first Quarterly meeting Responsible: Don
- d. Annually BVA Leadership team reviews Strategic Plan at an offsite meeting and sets new goals for the upcoming year and present to Board at Annual Convention meeting  
By June 2021 and annually afterwards. Responsible: Don
- e. Develop Job descriptions for all positions and update/audit annually  
By June 30, 2021 Responsible: Don / HRi
- f. Conduct annual Job evaluations incorporating 360 feedback for all HQ staff  
By June 30, 2021 and annually afterwards. Responsible: Don / Brigitte
- g. Investigate EOS implementation for BVA  
By June 30, 2021 Responsible: Don
- h. Annual compensation/benefits report to each employee

By June 30, 2021 Responsible: Brigitte / HRi

- i. Annual compensation comparison presented to BVA Board of Directors

By March Board meeting each year Responsible: Don / HRi

**4. Aggressively manage all expenses of the BVA including efficiencies and vendor negotiations to ensure good stewardship of all resources.**

- a. Monthly review of expenses by departments

By March 1, 2021 and then monthly when finances are totaled.

Responsible: Don / Brigitte

- b. Review Health Benefits

By October 1, 2021 Responsible: Don / HRi

- c. Review Direct Mail and Development costs and results annually

By November 1, 2021 Responsible: Don

## **Appendix**

### **Background Information informing the Strategic Plan:**

#### **Membership**

The BVA like many membership organizations and VSOs is facing challenging headwinds as it serves blinded veterans. For the last many years, the revenue and membership of the BVA has declined. Currently the BVA has approximately 6,800 members and in 2018/19 lost a net 884 members. In the last five years it is estimated that the membership role has reduced 35%.

#### **Revenue**

In 2019 the \$1.89M revenue budget was made up of about \$609,000 in bequests (one totaling about \$300,000), \$500,000 in interest, \$523,000 from direct mail, \$259,000 from Network for Good and Social Media and \$119,000 from Major Individual Gifts. Over \$99,000 were directly for the Operation Peer Support program. BVA has at least 50 donors who contributed \$1,000 or more with two donors who contributed \$30,000 and \$25,000.

Given the decline in membership, revenue and the amount of reserves available for sustainability, without a change in the direction of these numbers it is estimated that the BVA may not be able to operate past ten years.

#### **Membership Survey**

In July and August 2019, the Membership of the BVA was surveyed to gain feedback about the BVA. 2,000 members received electronic surveys and 138 members responded. During the BVA Tulsa Convention 2,500 additional members received a letter in the U.S. Mail and were invited to call and 800 number to provide their feedback or connect electronically. A week after the letter was mailed only two members connected. This is alarming

## **Survey Results**

**When asked their Overall Satisfaction rating 67% of members indicated Satisfaction or High Satisfaction. 23% were neutral and 10% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.**

**Survey questions asked about the four primary areas: Regional Groups, Veterans Service Program, Communication and Advocacy.**

### **Highlights of the surveys:**

- 1. 72% of members are married**
- 2. 90% satisfied with the Social aspect of the Convention and 86% were satisfied with the vendors and new devices at the Convention**
- 3. Facebook is the primary social media medium**
- 4. The Veterans Service Program had 53% satisfaction and 17 – 22% dissatisfaction**
- 5. Majority of members selected Mission and Improving to describe the BVA but do not select Innovative or creative. This summary mirrored BVA staff responses**
- 6. Of the four areas surveyed, Advocacy received the highest Satisfaction and lowest Dissatisfaction rating at 92% and 2%**
- 7. 91% indicated they would use an online portal to communicate with their elected official**

**A summary of the Membership survey results would indicate that BVA member's value:**

- 1. Strong advocacy with elected officials and with the VA**
- 2. Satisfaction with the Bulletin and e-newsletter as their primary connection with the BVA**
- 3. High desire to connect with other blind individuals**
- 4. Moderate Satisfaction with the Regional Groups with a higher satisfaction with Operation Peer Support (OPS) and Regional gatherings**

## **5. Moderate support for the Veterans Service Program with a higher dissatisfaction level of their services**

In reviewing the survey ratings of the four areas, the BVA has members who value the BVA mission and believe it is improving but would not be characterized as “Raving Fan” or “Highly Engaged.” As a membership organization that receives member referral primarily from the Veterans Administration (VA) and from other members, strong connection with other people who are blind and with the VA is important.

In his book, *Disciplines of Market Leaders*, by Brian Treacy, 1995, he states that organizations must do three things well: Efficiency, Innovation and Customer Intimacy and must do one of them extremely well. Companies like UPS are known for efficiency, Apple for Innovation and Nordstrom for Customer Intimacy. When BVA centralized services and since it has not been able to connect with all members electronically or through the mail, it has not been able to maintain a high level of customer intimacy. Going forward this should be a primary focus through communication, regional groups and programs such as Operation Peer Support, the Convention and other gatherings and connections.

### **Board Survey Results Summary:**

Board members completed a separate Board Survey shortly after the Membership Survey. In addition, Board Members were interviewed by phone for 30 – 60 minutes.

63% of the Board members rated How the BVA is achieving its mission as Good, Very Good or Excellent with 37% Fair and 0% Poor.

100% of the Board indicated they felt serving on the Board as Satisfied or Very Satisfied.

When asked to identify words that describe the BVA Mission and Improving was most selected

**When asked what has improved in the last year, it was Leadership and Executive Director and Greatest Challenge was Funding, Membership and Participation of Members.**

**When asked what the BVA did well, Advocating and the Bulletin were mentioned most.**

**From the electronic survey and the interviews, the Board is committed and engaged and deeply values the mission and work of the BVA. The Board realizes that due to the declining membership numbers and negative annual financials for at least the last three years, the need for strategic and informed action is significant.**

#### **Staff Survey Results Summary:**

**BVA staff completed a separate Employee before the Membership Survey. In addition, employees were interviewed for 45 – 60 minutes in the BVA office. BVA leadership was interviewed individually and the administration team and Veterans Service Program team were interviewed separately in a group.**

**When employees were asked about their Overall Job Satisfaction, they were significantly split. 57% indicated Satisfied or Very Satisfied and 43% were Neutral or Somewhat Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied.**

**Identical to the Board, when asked to identify words that describe the BVA Mission and Improving was most selected. Only one employee selected Innovative or Creative and no one selected Healthy.**

**In summary the top and significant issues shared by the employees was the dissatisfaction in compensation and the need for employees to perform multiple jobs.**

**The staff has a 79% satisfaction level in the personal satisfaction level they feel from their work at the BVA and 57% satisfaction level and 0% dissatisfaction level in their pride for working for the BVA.**

**79% are neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied regarding Having the Resources needed to Perform their job.**

**The BVA employee team highly value the mission of the BVA and are proud to serve the BVA membership. There is high frustration regarding pay and scope of work and a concern about being able to accomplish their jobs to a high standard level. They are aware of the declining membership numbers and financial position of the BVA.**

### **Summary of Top 10 Key Take Away Points:**

- 1. Need to create highly engaged members and VA for membership growth**
- 2. “Put fundraising on steroids” and capitalize on significant events of coming year**
- 3. ED should be fundraising 50% of his time and acquire additional fundraising resources**
- 4. Teach Story Telling and use as a membership and fundraising program**
- 5. Develop message to remind members what the BVA has accomplished for them in the past and “What’s in it for me now.”**
- 6. Strive for “Customer Intimacy” through communication, regional groups and programs and stronger VA connections**
- 7. Consider plan to provide Veterans Service Program services in regions**
- 8. Re institute Regional training program**
- 9. Create strong regional Operation Peer Support programs**
- 10. Enhance website to contain more information that was formerly included**

### **Key Focus Areas / Pillars for the BVA 2021-2024 Strategic Plan**

- 1. Fundraising**
- 2. Advocacy**
- 3. Member Engagement**
- 4. Operational Excellence**