

Tennessee Tri-
Stars & Stripes
Council
4-Year
Strategic Plan

2025-
2028

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Mission, Vision, & Values	4
Strategic Framework	5
(SWOT).....	5
Pipeline Integration	6
Lines of Effort:	6
Goal 1: Make Tennessee a Veteran Destination.....	7
Objective 1.1: Enhance SMVF recruitment and retention.....	7
Objective 1.2: Strengthen Support for Businesses that Recruit, Hire, and Retain service members, Veterans, and their families (SMVF).....	7
Goal 2: Strengthen Information Sharing and Outreach.....	8
Objective 2.1: Improve resource access and information sharing.	8
Objective 2.2 Establish a unified SMVF brand identity.	8
Goal 3: Enhance Education Engagement and Resources.....	9
Objective 3.1: Support and improve higher education opportunities for National Guard members through Department of Military and coordination.	9
Goal 4: Advance Health and Well-Being	11
Objective 4.1: Advocate for and support efforts to address homelessness and food insecurity among SMVF.	11
Objective 4.2: Expand and implement state-wide suicide prevention best practices for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF).....	12
Objective 4.3: Enhance service delivery to veterans illustrative of diverse populations across Tennessee.	13
Implementation Schedule	14

Executive Summary

The Tennessee Tri-Stars and Stripes Council for Military Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families (SMVF) emerges as a pivotal entity in the state's initiative to enhance the lives of those who have served. Governed by Executive Order 102, the Council is entrusted with a critical mandate: to coordinate all state-level SMVF initiatives, thereby establishing Tennessee as an exemplary state for military service members, veterans, and their families. This strategic plan outlines the Council's mission, vision, values, operational goals, and implementation framework, laying the foundation for a consolidated support system for SMVF.

The Tri-Stars and Stripes Council's mission is unequivocal: to position Tennessee as the preeminent state for SMVF. This ambitious goal reflects recognition of this demographic's unique challenges and sacrifices. The vision extends beyond mere recognition, aiming to foster collaboration between state agencies, private sectors, and non-profits to enhance the resources and opportunities available to SMVF. The Council's core values of honor, trust, and excellence encapsulate its commitment to service, ensuring that every initiative is grounded in integrity, transparency, and high standards.

The strategic plan identifies four significant goals crucial for improving the SMVF experience in Tennessee:

- Making Tennessee a destination for veterans requires ***recruiting and retaining military talent and bolstering veteran-owned businesses.*** This economic empowerment is crucial in creating a vibrant community that values and appreciates veterans' skills and experiences.
- ***Strengthening information sharing and outreach*** aims to eliminate barriers to accessing vital resources and unify the messaging around SMVF services. This effort is crucial for ensuring that all members of the SMVF community are informed and can benefit from the available support.
- ***Enhance educational engagement and resources,*** particularly by aligning educational offerings with the needs of the SMVF. By supporting higher education opportunities for National Guard members, the Council addresses a critical area for professional development and facilitates smoother transitions into civilian life.
- ***Advancing the health and well-being of the SMVF population*** acknowledges the pressing issues of homelessness and food insecurity. The Council advocates for comprehensive solutions and expands suicide prevention strategies, demonstrating its commitment to improving the quality of life and safeguarding the mental health of service members and their families.

To successfully implement these objectives, the Council adopts a robust framework emphasizing efficiency, collaboration, outreach, partnerships, and measurable outcomes. Each of these integrated lines of effort plays a crucial role in dismantling bureaucratic silos and promoting a culture of cooperation across state government initiatives. For instance, establishing public-private partnerships can catalyze resources and expertise, enriching the support landscape available to SMVF.

The Tennessee Tri-Stars and Stripes Council is a beacon of hope and support for service members, veterans, and their families. Through its strategic plan, the Council aims to enhance the overall quality of life for SMVF and emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach to service delivery. By leveraging the authority granted under Executive Order 102, the Council is positioned to create an interconnected and optimized support system, ensuring that those who have served our country receive the respect, resources, and opportunities they rightfully deserve. The future success of this initiative will ultimately demonstrate Tennessee's commitment to honoring its military community.

Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission: To make Tennessee the best state in the country for Service Members, Veterans and their Families to reside in and thrive while in uniform and once they have completed their military service.

Vision: The Tri-Stars and Stripes Council will serve as the coordinating body for military and Veteran initiatives in Tennessee, fostering collaboration among state agencies, private partners, and nonprofits to improve opportunities and resources for SMVF to thrive.

Values:

- Honor: Commitment to serving SMVF with integrity and respect
- Trust: Building strong relationships rooted in reliability and transparency
- Excellence: Striving for the highest standards in service delivery and collaboration

Executive Authority and Strategic Implementation

The strategic goals contained herein, operationalize Executive Order 102's mandate for the Council to serve as Tennessee's coordinating body for all SMVF initiatives. Per Section 2 of the Order, the Council reviews and coordinates all executive branch programs related to SMVF services and benefits. Section 12 further empowers this framework by requiring all state departments and agencies to cooperate with the Council's initiatives. This comprehensive coordination authority enables the Council to engage any state agency whose work impacts SMVF's quality of life, ensuring aligned and optimized delivery of services across all relevant state resources.

Strategic Framework

Key Strategies:

1. Enhanced SMVF Recruitment and Retention
 - Develop business hiring incentives through local governments and businesses.
 - Create a comprehensive SMVF resource package, including childcare and educational support.
 - Establish external partnerships for Veteran business development.
2. Stronger Information Sharing Capability
 - Launch a consolidated digital platform for SMVF resources.
 - Implement Veteran-specific training for government and nonprofit staff.
 - Develop collaborative outreach network with nonprofits and coalitions.
 - Create a Veteran-owned business directory with government and private sector promotion.
3. Evidence-Based Outcomes
 - Implement a comprehensive data collection system for SMVF needs and outcomes.
 - Establish continuous feedback mechanisms for program improvement.

(SWOT)

Strengths

- Strong economy and labor market conditions
- Diverse, holistic approach to Veteran services
- Strong executive support through Governor and TAG
- Pro-SMVF operating environment
- Large military footprint and partnerships
- Healthy provider ecosystem across all counties

Weaknesses

- Veterans' barriers to care
- Limited resources for program execution
- Branding and communication challenges
- Fragmented service delivery efforts
- Rural service delivery challenges
- Difficulties in assimilating Veterans into workforce

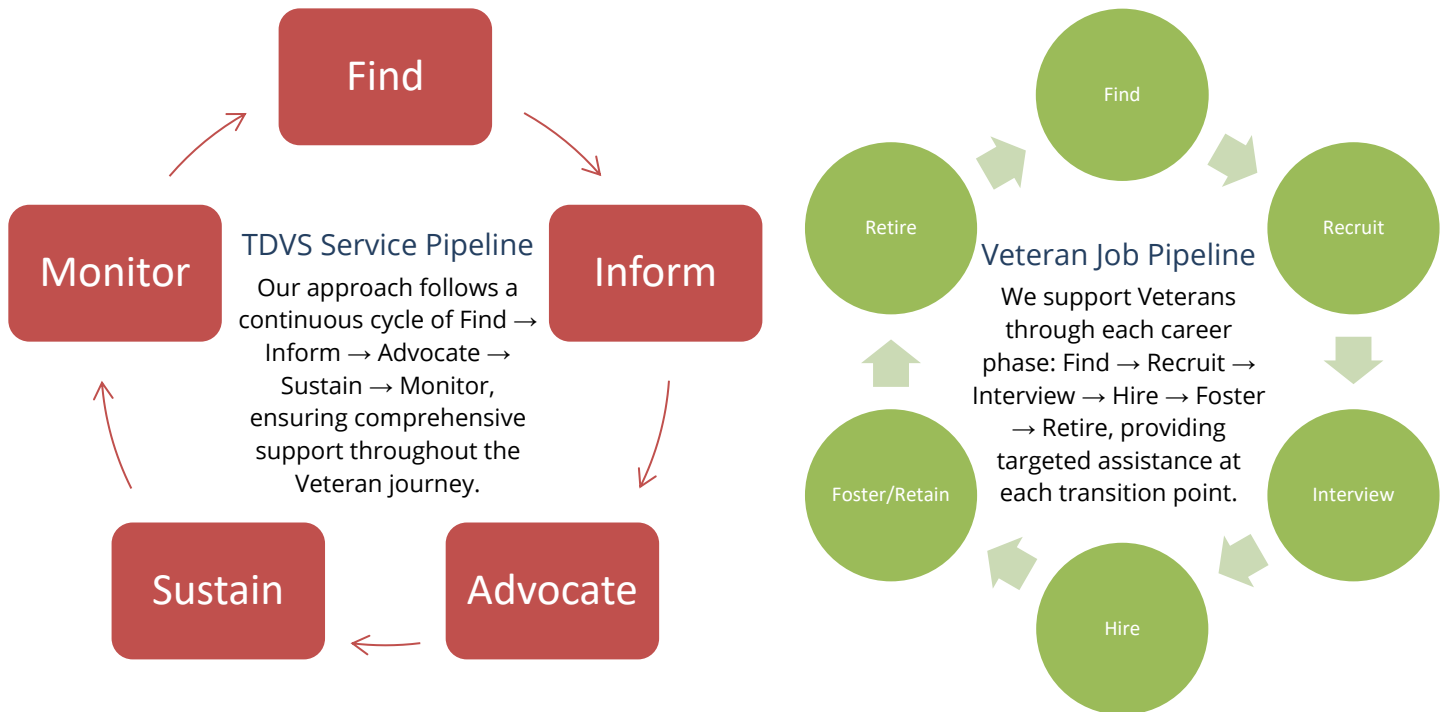
Opportunities

- Unified purpose and coordinated efforts
- Evidence-based outcomes implementation
- Enhanced stakeholder identification and engagement
- Improved collaboration and resource synchronization
- Increased business investment in Veterans

Threats

- Negative perceptions of Veteran services
- Regional fragmentation of efforts
- Resource sustainability challenges
- Declining Veteran population
- Elevated Veteran suicide rate
- Resource competition

Pipeline Integration



Lines of Effort:

1. Efficiency: Create greater efficiency in meeting SMVF needs through increased advocacy and policy efforts.
2. Collaborative: Remove silos in state government to drive better coordination and collaboration regarding services and resources.
3. Outreach: Enhance outreach efforts to reach all generations of Veterans.
4. Partnerships: Build public-private partnerships to create a coalition of partners across the state to provide better reach and access.
5. Outcomes: Determine measurable and achievable outcomes for the Council to pursue.

Goal 1: Make Tennessee a Veteran Destination

Objective 1.1: Enhance SMVF recruitment and retention.

- Action Steps:
 - Launch a Digital SMVF Veteran Coordination Portal (VCP) as a single point of information entry. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
 - Execute a comprehensive SMVF marketing campaign for Tennessee. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
 - Increase Job Fair Participation (In-Person and Virtual). *(TDLWD lead with support from SMVF Employment and Entrepreneurship Committee)*
- KPIs:
 - VCP user engagement: Achieve 20% registration of unique visitors on the Veteran Coordination Portal within the first year of operation. *(TDVS lead)*
 - Job Fair placement rate: Achieve a 30% placement rate for attendees per event. *(TDLWD lead)*

Objective 1.2: Strengthen Support for Businesses that Recruit, Hire, and Retain service members, Veterans, and their families (SMVF)

- Action Steps:
 - Support the Veteran Ready Business Recognition Program by encouraging local businesses to apply through the online application for one of the three levels. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Employment and Entrepreneurship Committee)*
 - Partner with local chambers of commerce to promote Veteran entrepreneurs. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Employment and Entrepreneurship Committee)*
 - Increase awareness of the Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) program administered by the Dept. of General Services that allows qualifying businesses to acquire valuable government surplus items directly related to their business operations at significant savings. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Outreach Committee)*
- KPI:
 - Receive 30 applications per Grand Division for a total of 90 for the Veteran Ready Business Recognition Award *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Employment and Entrepreneurship Committee)*
 - Beginning in fiscal year 2026 identify, document, and engage with 50 corporate decision-makers with a military background annually. (All state agencies with support from SMVF Employment and Entrepreneurship Committee)

Goal 2: Strengthen Information Sharing and Outreach

Objective 2.1: Improve resource access and information sharing.

- Action Steps:
 - Update and consolidate a directory of statewide SMVF resources. *(TN Comptroller with support from TDVS and Veteran Outreach Committee)*
 - Maintain an up-to-date list of all SMVF local coalitions and councils that can enhance outreach efforts in rural and metropolitan areas within the state. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
- KPI:
 - Achieve 60% awareness and access to the updated resource directory among SMVF through outreach events by the end of fiscal year 2026. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
 - Council Members will collectively participate in two (2) SMVF regional or county coalition or council meetings per quarter starting in fiscal year 2026.

Objective 2.2 Establish a unified SMVF brand identity.

- Action Steps:
 - Create a collaboration with a “Veteran-Ready” marketing agency. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
 - Develop comprehensive brand guidelines and materials. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
 - Execute a statewide SMVF marketing campaign highlighting Tennessee’s resources and benefits. *(TDVS lead with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*
- KPI:
 - By the end of fiscal year 2027 increase customer service inquiries to the Department of Veterans Services by 25% over the baseline set in fiscal year 2025. *(TDVS with support from Veteran Outreach Committee)*

Goal 3: Enhance Education Engagement and Resources

Objective 3.1: Support and improve higher education opportunities for National Guard members through Department of Military and coordination.

- Action Steps:
 - Collaborate with the Department of Military to refine and promote the TN STRONG program. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Launch a secure TN STRONG benefit portal. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Encourage military cultural competency training to higher education staff. *(THEC lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Implement comprehensive TN STRONG program enhancement under Department of Military oversight, ensuring alignment with force readiness and retention goals. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Develop integrated tracking systems between the Department of Military and higher education institutions to monitor Guard member academic progress and program effectiveness. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from THEC and the SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Create streamlined processes for TN STRONG benefit administration that protect service member information while expediting support delivery. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
- KPIs:
 - Develop an enduring STRONG Program marketing and outreach campaign to increase awareness among eligible Guard members and formalize its inclusion in key Guard events (e.g., pre & post mobilization briefings, recruiting & retention briefings, and company-level leader courses, etc.) by the end of fiscal year 2026. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Process 100% of STRONG applications within 45 days of receipt through Dept. of Military channels. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Launch a survey initiative for all STRONG Program participants focusing on program satisfaction and utilization among participating Guard members to establish a baseline rate by the end of fiscal year 2026. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Establish an internal report to track the positive correlation between STRONG Program participation and Guard member retention rates by the end of fiscal year 2026. *(Dept. of Military lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*

Objective 3.2: Align education systems with SMVF needs.

- Action Steps:
 - Increase the number of Purple Star Schools within Tennessee. *(State Board of Education lead with support from SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*
 - Increase awareness and knowledge of the requirements to receive the Purple Star School award through collaboration with the State Board of Education by encouraging MIC-3 compliance training for schools focusing on outreach and information sharing. *(State Board of Education lead with support from the SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*

- KPI:
 - Achieve the award of Purple Star School for all schools within the six highest populated areas of the state by the end of fiscal year 2027. *(State Board of Education lead with support from the SMVF Education Benefits Committee)*

Goal 4: Advance Health and Well-Being

Objective 4.1: Advocate for and support efforts to address homelessness and food insecurity among SMVF.

- Action Steps:
 - Collaborate with the Dept. of Human Services and housing organizations to raise awareness about available programs. *(Dept. of Human Services lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Facilitate partnerships between housing providers and Veteran-serving organizations to promote "housing-first" approaches. *(TDHS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Promote food assistance programs and increase outreach to high-risk SMVF populations through local partners. *(TDHS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Encourage city and county mayors across the state to take the Mayor's Pledge to House Homeless Veterans. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Increase awareness of VA housing support programs including Grant and Per Diem (GDP) Case Management Grants and Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) Grants. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
- KPI:
 - Increase enrollment in Veteran-targeted housing and food assistance programs by 20% by the end of fiscal year 2027. *(TDHS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Achieve 100% of Tennessee City or County Mayors of the six largest populated areas taking the Mayor's Pledge by Sept. 30, 2025. *(TDVS with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*

Objective 4.2: Expand and implement state-wide suicide prevention best practices for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF).

- Action Steps:
 - Share timely, valid and actionable data to drive impactful strategies. *(TDH lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Build and mobilize a comprehensive community support network through targeted engagement, education, and collaborative action with diverse stakeholders including general communities, faith-based organizations, and SMVF coalitions. *(TDVS lead with support from Dept. of MHSAS, Veterans Services, Dept. of Health, SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Coordinate, collaborate, and synchronize with partners and stakeholders to create an enduring SMVF suicide prevention framework across Tennessee. *(TDH lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Establish a Veteran endorsement (CPRS-V) for Tennessee's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) Program. *(TDMHSAS Services lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Increase the number of Tennessee Veterans enrolled in VA health care. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
- KPI:
 - Annually, incorporate 2 additional SMVF serving resources into the Department of Health's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Services Statewide Directory and Resource Information Guide. *(TDH lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Incorporate SMVF data and SMVF focused strategies, and best practices for the prevention of SMVF deaths by suicide into the Department of Health's Suicide Prevention in Tennessee 2025 Annual Report. *(TDH lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Award the first CPRS-V endorsements by end of fiscal year 2026. *(TDMHSAS and Veterans Services lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*
 - Annually, increase the number of Tennessee Veterans enrolled in VA health care by 2.5%. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Suicide Prevention Committee)*

Objective 4.3: Enhance service delivery to veterans illustrative of diverse populations across Tennessee.

- Action Steps:
 - Adopt approaches aligned with federal VA initiatives to create safer and more supportive environments where all veterans, including those from a sample of veteran populations (women, rural, minority, and disabled veterans), feel empowered to seek help and receive the care they have earned. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Launch a comprehensive needs assessment initiative to gather input from a sample of veteran populations in Tennessee, including women veterans (the fastest-growing demographic utilizing VA services), rural veterans, and other groups facing unique access challenges. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
- KPI:
 - Survey a diverse sample of 1,500-2,000 veterans by the end of fiscal year 2027 to establish baseline insights regarding service gaps and accessibility challenges. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*
 - Develop and implement at least two new outreach initiatives by FY2028 specifically designed to increase service utilization rates among identified veteran communities. *(TDVS lead with support from SMVF Equity and Resources Committee)*

Implementation Schedule

Implementation of the 4-Year Strategic Plan will be managed by the Council Leadership. On a yearly basis, all Council Members will collectively review the objectives and actions steps outlined in this plan, based on committee assignment, to ensure compliance.

A schedule of activities to be accomplished over the 2025-2028 period is defined below.

Objective(s)	Action Step(s)	Responsible Party	Start Date	End Date	Status	Notes
Goal 1:						
Make Tennessee a Veteran Destination						
Objective 1.1:						
Objective 1.2:						
Goal 2:						
Strengthen Information Sharing and Outreach						
Objective 2.1:						
Objective 2.2:						
Goal 3:						
Enhance Education Enhancement and Resources						
Objective 3.1:						
Objective 3.2:						
Goal 4:						
Advance Health and Well-Being						
Objective 4.1:						
Objective 4.2:						
Objective 4.3:						