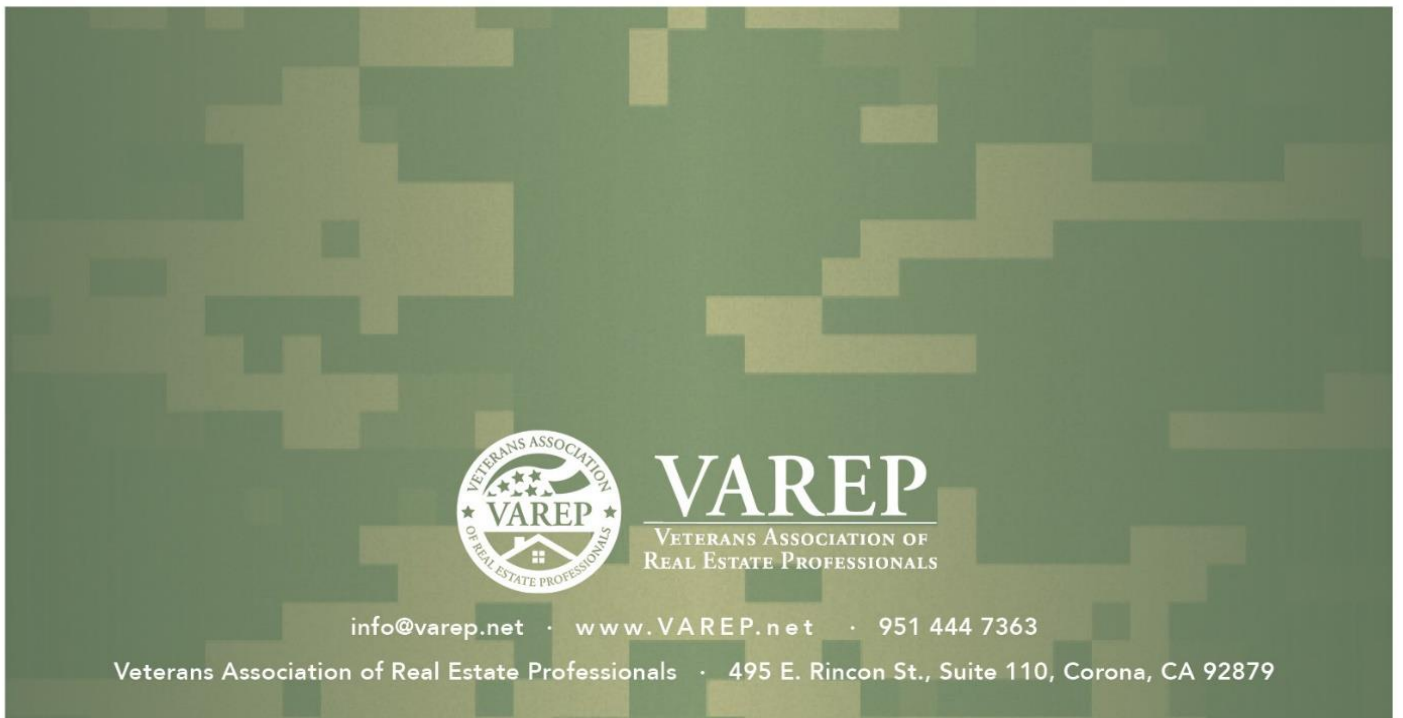




## VAREP LOCAL CHAPTER HANDBOOK

VERSION 11



**VAREP**  
VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF  
REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS

info@varep.net · www.VAREP.net · 951 444 7363

Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals · 495 E. Rincon St., Suite 110, Corona, CA 92879

## CONTENTS

I.	WELCOME .....	1
II.	ABOUT VAREP.....	2
III.	VAREP ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION .....	4
IV.	STARTING A VAREP LOCAL CHAPTER .....	9
V.	VAREP NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP .....	11
VI.	LOCAL CHAPTER BASICS .....	13
VII.	BOARD DIRECTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	18
VIII.	CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS .....	23
IX.	BOARD DIRECTOR MANAGEMENT .....	29
X.	CHAPTER FINANCES.....	37
XI.	REIMBURSEMENT POLICY .....	40
XII.	EVENT MANAGEMENT .....	44
XIII.	SUMMARY .....	50

## **I. WELCOME**

Dear VAREP Local Chapter Board Directors:

Reading this manual will solve 90 percent of your questions and save you countless hours.

You are about to embark on a challenging yet rewarding mission: operating a Local Chapter of VAREP. We at VAREP National commend you on your initiative and will do everything we can to help you succeed.

As leaders of your Local Chapter, you will create awareness and be a force within the real estate community to ensure that our mission is improving the lives of servicemembers and veterans through housing and philanthropy.

The emphasis of a Local Chapter is on the word “local.” Membership and serving members are important; however, the ultimate goal of a Local Chapter is to make a difference in addressing the local housing needs of the military and veteran communities.

A VAREP Local Chapter is a group of VAREP members who live or work in a particular locality and who, as a matter of geographic convenience, organize themselves to promote VAREP’s mission and goals cooperatively. It serves as a focal point from which its members can share their professional experiences and provide educational opportunities in the advancement of military and veteran housing initiatives.

Keep this manual close at hand throughout your term, as we believe it to be a helpful resource for you. By the end of your term, you should have an even more valuable tool to pass on as part of your legacy.

This manual offers information to make your term easier and more successful. Please take advantage of it, as it was designed specifically for you.

We at VAREP National wish you the best for your term and thank you for your dedication and service!

Welcome to the VAREP Team!

## II. ABOUT VAREP

### Who We Are

- Established in 2011, the USA Homeownership Foundation, Inc. (DBA VAREP), is a 501(c)3, dedicated to improving the lives of veterans through education, housing, economic development, and philanthropy. **Note:** We were established in 2011 as a California corporation and, once we received our federal 501(c)3 tax-exempt IRS status on November 15, 2012, we started operating as a national nonprofit.
- In December 2019, we incorporated our “Doing Business Name” known as “Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals” (VAREP) as an official 501(c)19, non-chartered Veterans Service Organization (VSO).
- A dedicated Veteran Service Organization (VSO) working alongside a Housing and Economic Organization allows a national footprint and increased resources in supporting veterans with their needs.
- Our economic development programs help transitioning military and veterans including job training and placement assistance and assists veteran’s standup their own up businesses through community mentorship partnerships.
- Our grass roots advocacy efforts on key issues such as decreasing veteran homelessness, increasing affordable veteran housing, increasing suicide prevention training, and increasing veteran wellness programs are essential for all of America.

### Vision

Our Vision – To be THE resource where veterans of all backgrounds can get assistance and resources for the following:

- Housing and Homeownership Counseling and Services
  - The VA loan benefit
  - Workforce Development and Staffing Services,
  - Small Business Mentoring and Incubation Services
  - Suicide Prevention Awareness and Alternative Therapy Resources
- And so much more!

If we can’t help you, we will point you in the right direction. We’ve leveled up the Veteran Service Organization Space – GAME ON!

### Mission

Our mission is to improve the lives of veterans through education, housing, economic development, and philanthropy.

**Six-Point Plan: We've Got your Back!**

1. **Veteran Membership** - Through our local, national, and online events, veterans and their families have a resource of professionals known as the "MVP Referral Network" that are ready, able, and willing to support your journey to realizing the American Dream.
2. **Education** - Hosting events to educate and one-on-one counsel veterans on financial literacy, sustainable homeownership, the VA home loan, and foreclosure/homelessness prevention.
3. **Affordable Housing** – Working with financial institutions, government agencies, builders, and community organizations to provide affordable home buying opportunities for the veteran community.
4. **Economic Development** - Maximizing veterans' financial potential through workforce development and staffing services including corporate internship programs. We also provide small business start-up incubation & training programs followed by post-graduation business mentorship services.
5. **Professional Membership** - Providing a place where thousands of real estate, lending, and housing professionals can network, share ideas, and become stronger to better serve the housing needs of veterans in their local communities.
6. **Philanthropy** - Supporting VETCares, Inc. (our sister company) and their amazing grant programs such as emergency need grants, alternative therapy grants, housing closing cost grants, and CampCares outdoor retreat grants all helping thousands of veterans across America.

### **III. VAREP ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

**Legal Name**

USA Homeownership Foundation, Inc. (registered as a C corporation in California)

**Doing Business as (DBA)**

Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals (VAREP)

**National Headquarters Address**

495 E. Rincon St., Suite 110, Corona, CA 92879

**Date of Incorporation**

May 11, 2011 – State of California

**Type of Corporation**

C Corporation

**Date IRS Tax Non-exempt Status Was Established**

November 15, 2012

**Tax-Exempt IRS Identification Number**

45-2458485

**Nonprofit Category – 501(c)(3)**

A 501(c)(3) exemption applies to a corporation and any community chest, fund, or foundation organized and operated exclusively for the following purposes: religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational; fostering national or international amateur sports competition; or preventing cruelty to children or animals.

Note: We are incorporated in California and our 501(c)(3) status gives us authority to do business as a nonprofit across the United States. VAREP National will file the necessary paperwork and pay the fees to do business and perform legal fundraising in your state. All Local Chapters will operate under the VAREP National Employer Identification Number (EIN).

**Housing Counseling Agency:** VAREP is a HUD-approved counseling affiliate #90312.

**Corporate Officers**

- President/CEO/Founder – Son Nguyen
- Secretary – Carla Lemon
- Treasurer – Sandy Heath

**Note:** Son Nguyen is the only person in the organization with signing authority to sign any and all Local Chapter agreements with vendors. All Chapter agreements and contracts must be submitted to the Association Director for review, and then it will be forwarded to Son for approval and signature.

## **Insurance**

VAREP National will maintain a blanket General Liability and Directors' and Officers' Insurance on the Chapter's behalf. It is an important means of protection available for defending against a claim against the VAREP chapter and its officers, directors, and/or volunteers in good standing when performing duties at VAREP events.

Depending upon the jurisdiction where the event occurs, volunteer immunity may also be provided by law. Some states have enacted laws to protect volunteers, including officers and directors, from exposure to personal liability for the organization's acts and omissions. The annual premium for the Directors' and Officers' Insurance and General Liability Insurance will be divided among the Local Chapters in operation and allocated accordingly.

**Note:** If your Chapter needs insurance for a specific event, please contact go to the Leadership Toolbox online and upload the executed facility agreement. VAREP National will provide the binder for your event.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

### **National VAREP President/CEO**

This is a paid executive management position that is approved by and accountable to the National Board of Directors. The National VAREP President: (1) leads, creates, and develops programs that carry out the VAREP Vision and Mission and oversees the implementation of these programs; (2) has the authority to sign legal documents on behalf of the corporation, including the ability to sign corporate checks, although other officers may also have this power; and (3) oversees fundraising operations and is the organization's chief fundraiser. This involves acting as the primary spokesperson for the organization, recruiting donors, and attending fundraising functions.

### **Executive Director**

This is a paid executive management position that is approved by and accountable to the VAREP National President and CEO. This position takes a hands-on, business-oriented role and oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization once the board approves annual plans, budgets and other macro strategies. At large nonprofits, especially trade associations, the Executive Director might be the public face of the organization, delegating management responsibilities to the chief operating officer, CFO, development director, and department heads. A nonprofit Executive Director also often helps with board development, suggesting, recruiting, and training volunteer board directors.

### **Association Director**

This is a paid management position that is approved by and accountable to the VAREP National President and CEO. This position takes a hands-on, business-oriented role and oversees the day-to-day management of all things Local Chapter related. Activities include opening, closing, relaunching, coaching, and managing chapters across America.

### **National Board of Directors (NBOD)**

National Board of Directors are appointed by the VAREP National President and approved by the corporate officers. This board is led by the Chairman. Each volunteer National Board Director serves a three-year term with a two-term maximum. The National Board appoints National Committee members with task of assisting on specific programs and projects. These positions are volunteer-based.

### **National Legislative Committee (NLC)**

NLC Chair and Co-Chair are appointed by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director. NLC members are voted in by the NLC Chair and Co-Chair. Each volunteer NLC member serves a three-year term with a two-term maximum. The purpose of this board is to support VAREP's mission through engaging with local VAREP chapters on various legislative advocacy efforts. Additionally, this board is to advocate with Congress, trade organizations, and agencies to support our efforts to increase sustainable homeownership among the military and veteran communities. The NLC Committee Chair will work with all departments within VAREP to ensure the legislative programs are met.

### **National Education Committee (NEC)**

NEC Chair and Co-Chair are appointed by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director. NEC members are voted in by the NLC Chair and Co-Chair. Each volunteer NEC member serves a three-year term with a two-term maximum. The purpose of this board is to support VAREP's mission through education of real estate, lending, and housing professionals as well as active military and veterans. The NEC Committee Chair will work with all departments within VAREP to ensure the educational programs are met.

### **VAREP National Operating Divisions**

- Professional Association. This Division is led by the Association Director, who reports to the VAREP National President and CEO. This Division is responsible for identifying, recruiting, developing, and managing local VAREP Chapters; implementing the plan for VAREP's annual Policy and National conferences; managing industry and consumer website content, including quarterly newsletters, online training and VAREP interviews; ensuring all VAREP education courses are updated and registered with selected states for real estate "Continuing Education (CE)" credits; and providing value for all VAREP members.
- Housing Counseling. VAREP is a HUD-approved counseling affiliate #90312. This Division is led by the Housing Counseling Director, who reports to the VAREP National President and CEO. This Division is responsible for managing the counseling programs that are a part of VAREP's Homeownership Center. This includes Housing Counseling (Pre-Purchase, Post-Purchase, and Foreclosure Prevention) and Financial Capability Counseling (credit building, building emergency savings, and asset building). This division will oversee the counseling staff to ensure compliance with federal regulations, funding requirements, best practices, and adherence to our company policy and procedures.
- Real Estate Development. This Division is led by the Real Estate Development Director, who reports to the VAREP National President and CEO. This Division is responsible for identification, development, management, and disposition of the real estate assets owned by VAREP.

Programs under management include Freedom Flippers, an abandoned rehab and resale property initiative; House-A-Vet, a mortgage-free home donation initiative for deserving heroes; and an affordable housing development initiative for low- and moderate-income veterans.

- VAREPCares Philanthropy. VAREPCares supports active military and veterans who face a sudden emergency or hardship. Every man and woman who has honorably served deserves a place to go when they need a hand up. VAREPCares is a culmination of Local Chapter and VAREP National efforts.

### **Chapter President**

The initial Chapter President is appointed by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director, must be a veteran, and serves a three-year term. Thereafter, the Chapter President is elected by the Local Chapter Board of Directors to serve a two-year term, unless otherwise determined by the VAREP National President or Association Director. Each volunteer Chapter President is responsible for the operations of the Local Chapter within his or her community / geographic territory.

### **Chapter Board of Directors**

The initial Chapter Board of Directors are appointed by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director and serves a three-year term. Thereafter, the Chapter Board of Directors are elected by the current Local Chapter Board of Directors to serve a two-year term, unless otherwise determined by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director.

### **Chapter Committee Members**

The Chapter Committee may be formed by the Chapter Board of Directors to facilitate the purposes of the VAREP mission within the local community / geographic territory. Committee Members are volunteers appointed by the Chapter President to serve the Local Chapter for the Committee term for the purpose it was created or until relieved.

### **VAREP General Members**

Members of the VAREP Local Chapter are individuals, sponsors, and supporters in the real estate industry within the local community / geographic territory. Members are those within the real estate profession. Membership is renewed on an annual basis. Each active member participating in a VAREP event is serving strictly in a volunteer role.

## **VAREP NATIONAL CONFERENCES**

### Policy Conference – Washington, D.C. – June (Dates May Vary)

As the voice for military and veteran real estate, we will advocate and encourage financial institutions, government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs), and government agencies to create programs that suit their unique needs. The conference is filled with educational sessions and town halls to educate attendees on important housing policies, lending initiatives, and economic developments affecting the military and veteran communities. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet with members of Congress to

advocate VAREP's Policy Positions, including issues that affect military and veteran homeownership, financial literacy, and economic development.

National Convention (formerly known as Leadership Academy) - October (Dates May Vary)

The VAREP National Conference will educate, develop, and empower current and future leaders within the VAREP organization to equip VAREP leaders with the necessary tools to serve the housing needs of military and veterans.

*Top Five Reasons to Attend*

1. Increase Leadership Abilities. Attendees will walk away with an opportunity to learn something new or be reminded about an important leadership principle from the many breakout and general sessions.
2. A Source of Nourishment. Nourishment is defined as "the substance necessary for growth, health, and good condition." The weight of leadership can be heavy, so attending the leadership academy allows leaders to be refreshed and renewed.
3. Network with Industry Leaders. Attendees will connect and network with other leaders, building relationships that can last long after the academy is over. These relationships are valuable to the leadership journey.
4. Powerful Certification Classes. VAREP offers several veteran and housing certification classes including: Military and Veterans Housing Certification (MVHC), CreditSmart Military Module, Fair Housing Best Practices, and Servicemember Civil Relief Act (SCRA). You will be able to incorporate this valuable information into your business plan.
5. Military & Veteran Vendor Expo. Attendees will connect with vendors that cater to the military and veteran marketplace.

**Chapter Financial and Attendee Expectation**

Each Local Chapter is expected to raise enough money to cover trip expenses and send the following minimum attendees to the annual conferences indicated:

- Policy Conference: Government Affairs Director and one other Board director to attend.
- National Convention: A minimum of five of the eight Chapter Board of Directors to attend.

**Note:** It is highly recommended for each board director to attend the Annual VAREP National Convention.

## IV. STARTING A VAREP LOCAL CHAPTER

Local VAREP Professional Chapters allow us to empower real estate and lending professionals to better serve the housing needs of military and veteran families.

### Guidelines to Starting a VAREP Local Chapter

1. **Explore.** Read the *entire* website to understand the VAREP organization.
2. **Read.** Understand the “CHAPTER LAUNCH MANUAL” located on the website.
3. **Contact Us.** Contact the VAREP National Office at 951-444-7363, or email [info@varep.net](mailto:info@varep.net), to schedule a Chapter launch orientation call with Association Director or CEO.
4. **Membership.** Become a VAREP member by creating an account and paying the \$99.00 membership fee. Explore “Membership” on the website to see what it has to offer.
5. **Board of Directors Application.** Fill out the online “BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION” located on the website.
6. **Leadership Orientation Meeting.** Organize a “VAREP Leadership Orientation Meeting.” Round up real estate professionals in your area who are interested in hearing about VAREP and who may want to be involved at the Board level.  
  
**Note:** A successful orientation meeting should have approximately 20 real estate professionals. The presentation should be made by the Association Director. VAREP National will support you by creating the marketing to distribute and a PowerPoint presentation to utilize.
7. **Interview Volunteers.** Follow up with volunteers interested in Board positions by having them apply. You should follow up with all those who attended this meeting to measure interest level and to encourage those who are interested to fill out the VAREP “Board of Directors Application” to apply for one of the eight local Board positions.
8. **Formation Documents.** Fill out all documents to create a Local Chapter Board: Petition to form a Local VAREP Chapter, Chapter Affiliation Agreement, Local Chapter Board of Director Nomination Form, and VAREP Leadership Oaths. Submit all paperwork to VAREP National.
9. **Write a Strategic Business Plan.** The business plan includes a market analysis, marketing plan, and budget to be submitted to the Association Director within two weeks after constituting the first Board meeting. The final Chapter Business Plan should be completed no later than four weeks after the submission of all paperwork to VAREP National.

### **Guidelines for Assembling a Founding Chapter Board**

- Each Chapter is led by a Board of eight volunteers.
- Five of the eight Board of Directors must be veterans within the real estate, lending, and housing industries.
- A maximum of three lenders may be on each Board.
- The Founding Chapter President MUST be a veteran.
- Service Term: The Founding Board service term is three years. Each Board term thereafter is two years.
- Local Chapter Board positions are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Outreach Director, Education Director, Membership Director, and Government Affairs Director.

**Note:** To avoid nepotism, board members cannot be related by blood or marriage, in a romantic relationship, work in the same office, partners of business or otherwise and/or belong to the same business team.

### **Chapter Launch Document Checklist**

- Petition to form a Local Chapter
- VAREP Chapter Affiliation Agreement
- Local Chapter Board of Director Nomination Form
- Oath of VAREP Leadership

**For questions and further guidance, call 951-444-7363 and request to speak with the Association Director or CEO.**

## V. VAREP NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

### AS A VAREP MEMBER, YOU WILL HAVE:

- The opportunity to serve the housing needs of those who have served us – **sometimes our heroes need heroes**;
- The opportunity to be part of the **First, Only, and Largest** national nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of servicemembers and veterans through housing and philanthropy;
- The opportunity to further **develop your business** by networking with over 7,000 VAREP members across America;
- The opportunity to **receive essential education** to better serve the military and veteran communities;
- The opportunity to **share and discover** new ideas with like-minded individuals while developing lifetime friendships with great people;
- The opportunity to be recognized as the subject matter expert and **become a valuable resource** for the servicemembers and veterans in your community;
- The opportunity to **join or start a local chapter** in your area and be the boots of the ground in carrying out the VAREP mission;
- The opportunity to participate in **national conferences**, exclusive **training webinars**, **VARAP podcasts**, and gain access to **valuable industry reports/insights**;
- The opportunity to be the voice for **removing barriers that servicemembers and veterans face in housing**. VAREP members advocate local and national officials to make a difference; and
- The opportunity to fundraise and **give back to the community through VAREPCares**.

### NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- **FREE Training** – VAREP members are educated on military and veteran housing as well as other veteran topics through online webinars. Training and education webinars offered four times per year.
- **Industry Reports & Statistics** – VAREP members have access to industry reports and statistics having to do with all things military and veterans. In-depth analysis and editorials with a special focus on veteran housing issues are also provided.
- **Networking, listing, and referral opportunities** from VAREP member directory – VAREP members are encouraged to network with other members in order to grow their business.
- **Discounts to VAREP national events** – VAREP members are entitled to receive discounts to attend two national conferences per year.
- **Use of VAREP logo** – VAREP members are granted permission to download and use the VAREP logo.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$99.00

**Note:** Chapters are NOT authorized to charge a separate fee for a “Local Chapter Membership.” However, Chapters are permitted to charge members and non-members for admission to Chapter events.

### **VAREP Professional Membership**

VAREP has a standardized annual national membership dues structure of \$99 per individual membership, whether as a National Member-at-Large or a Local Chapter member. This fee goes to VAREP National for operational expenses. Chapters are not to use their “squares” attached to their checking account to collect Membership dues. All members must join through VAREP.net. **Membership renewals will automatically occur on the annual anniversary date for each member. The card on file will be charged.**

### **VAREP IS NOT A BUSINESS LEAD RESOURCE**

Our members are important to our mission. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable community organization rather than a 501(c)(6) trade organization, with our first duty to serve the veteran community. Our members should consider VAREP as an educational resource to help them better serve the housing needs of those who have served us. **Members should NOT expect a community nonprofit like VAREP to provide any business lead opportunities.**

## **VI. LOCAL CHAPTER BASICS**

### **VAREP National's Chapter relations objectives are to provide:**

- Centralized operational, membership, and event support from VAREP National staff.
- Regular communication regarding VAREP's strategic direction, as well as the organization's activities, goals, and objectives, via ongoing newsletters, electronic updates, and national events.

### **Chapter Milestones**

1. Chapter Interest: Local boots on the ground submits a petition to the Association Director requesting to start a local VAREP Chapter.
2. Chapter Formation: Association Director works with local boots on the ground to form a Power of 8.
3. Chapter Launch: Association Director will help newly launched and re-launched Chapters through first steppingstones (L&L, Fundraisers, Membership Mixers, etc.) up to the first six months.
4. Chapter Intervention for Struggling Chapters: Association Director will coach and mentor struggling Chapters through challenging times to identify root cause and build a plan for resolution to proper path.
5. Chapter Conservatorship (Rehabilitation): Chapters with 4 or less Board of Directors will be placed under conservatorship by the Association Director for a minimum of 6 months. During this time, all Chapter Board of Directors will follow direction and guidance from National to get the Chapter back on its feet.
6. Chapter Suspension/Termination: Chapters failing to meet standards of policy, as outlined in the Chapter Handbook, will be shut down for a minimum of one year. After one year, the Chapter may be relaunched under the direction of the Association Director.

### **Board Eligibility**

- Any general member in good standing may serve as a Board of Director through appointment or election procedures as determined and approved by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director in conjunction with the appointed Chapter President.
- Local Chapter Board positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Community Outreach Director, Education Director, Membership Director, and Government Affairs Director.
- A general member is restricted from serving as Chapter President without having served on the Chapter Board unless appointed by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director.
- The position of Founding Chapter President must be a veteran. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Board positions are volunteer-based and limited to the availability of having no more than three lenders on the Board. The remaining Board directors should be real estate professionals.

- Five of the eight Board of Directors must be veterans within the real estate, lending, and housing industries. (Exceptions are to be approved by the VAREP National President and/or Association Director on a case-by-case basis).
- Board Directors may not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position.

### **Board Positions Guidelines**

- All new Board positions are recommended by the Association Director, then confirmed and appointed by the VAREP National President. Existing board positions are elected, appointed and confirmed by existing Chapter Board of Directors.
- Each Board position has one vote.
- The Board term is two years, except the Founding Board, which has a term of three years. All Board directors can serve in the same position for a maximum of two consecutive terms (to serve in the same capacity again, the individual must sit out one term before being appointed or elected again).
- Election years shall run based on the next calendar year from when the chapter was formed.
- To avoid nepotism, board members cannot be related by blood or marriage, in a romantic relationship, work in the same office, partners of business or otherwise and/or belong to the same business team.

### **Committee Members**

Chapter Boards are not authorized to add any other voting Board directors to the existing Board structure prescribed by VAREP National. The title “Board of Directors” is reserved for voting Board Members. Only the Board of Directors will be granted access to the VAREP Toolbox. VAREP suggests that, if a Board wants to have non-voting members as part of the Board to do specific tasks such as fundraising, media, etc., The Chapter President appoints individuals to serve as “Committee Chairs”.

**Note:** Having Committee Chairs is a great way to train future Board Directors and is encouraged.

### **Chapter Board Meetings**

- Chapters should conduct regular in-person monthly Board meetings.
- Agenda should be prepared one week prior to meeting.
- Meetings should be focused and use Robert’s Rules of Order as a guide.
- Each Board Director should be punctual and keep to the time allotted for the meeting.
- If members or non-voting members attend meetings, a separate “General Session” is recommended.

### **Monthly Chapter Leadership Calls**

The Chapter President and Vice President are required to have a call with the Association Director monthly. The purpose is to advise the Chapter Leadership on events and operational items that have transpired during the month. Conversely, all leadership will share with VAREP National any comments, successes, and concerns.

### **Annual Events/Business Plan**

Each Chapter is required to submit its annual business plan by October 30 of each year to the Association Director. The Association Director will review and work with the Chapter to edit, if necessary. The Chapter business plan must be finalized and submitted to the Association Director no later than November 15 of each year.

### **The Power of 8**

Each board is required to have eight active (participating) board directors either at launch or within three months of launch. If this criterion is not met, it is up to the VAREP National President, and/or Association Director to suspend a chapter and all its activities.

NOTE: Any time a board drops below 5 active board directors, the board will be under VAREP National Conservatorship. This means the VAREP National President and Association Director would intervene to suspend all Chapter activity and assist to bring board directors back to the Power of 8. Boards that consist of four or less board directors will not have any power or right to conduct Chapter Events and use Chapter Funds.

### **The Power of 8 Plus 8**

Each board is highly recommended to have eight active (participating) board directors plus eight committee members within 15 months of launch.

### **Required Annual Chapter Events**

1. **Monthly Chapter Board Meetings.** Local chapter board directors are required to meet monthly to plan, discuss, and implement all chapter required activities.
2. **General Member Meetings.** Local chapters are required to host regular general member meetings to disseminate national and chapter information to general membership.
3. **Industry Lunch and Learns.** VAREP Local Chapters will hold Real Estate Lunch and Learns, where Real Estate Professionals, lenders, and housing professionals can get educated on military- and veteran-related housing issues. Topics include but are not limited to home loan preapprovals, down payment assistance, and the VA home loan program.
4. **Fundraisers.** Throughout the year, VAREP National and Local Chapters host charity events. Each chapter is expected to raise a minimum of \$30,000 annually broken down as follows:
  - Policy Conference Expenses -\$7,500
  - National Convention Expenses -\$7,500
  - Operational Reserves -\$5,000
  - VAREP National Operation Tithing (3% of gross up to \$5,000 Cap) -\$3,000
  - VAREPCares -\$7,000

**Note:** The purpose of a fundraiser is to fund Chapter operational expenses and travel expenses for Board Directors to attend VAREP's National Conferences, and to host a VAREPCares philanthropic event annually. Additionally, raise enough to operationally tithe to VAREP National (see financial section of handbook).

5. **VAREPCares.** Each Chapter is required to do a VAREPCares event yearly for a veteran family or families in need. The Chapter chooses a cause or specific family to help. The Chapter secures approval from VAREP National and helps the local veteran family in its time of need.
6. **MVHC.** This class is required to be taught by all chapters to be eligible for the President's or Chairman's Circle annual awards.

### **NATIONAL CHAPTER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

Year-End Chapter Awards (October through October for each calendar year). Awards are presented at annual National Convention held in October of each year.

#### **Rookie Award (First Year (12 months) after Launch Date)**

- Twelve Monthly Board Meetings (If Meetings were not held...documentation of why?)
- Six General Member Meetings
- Six Industry Lunch and Learn
- Fundraisers – Enough to finance the following:
  - Pay approved Chapter operational expenses.
  - Pay or reimburse Board directors for two VAREP annual conferences (flight, room, and transportation)
  - Help local military and/or veteran families through VAREPCares
- Two VAREPCares Event – Documented (proof of how many veterans were served and impacted) and approved by VAREP National

#### **Gold Star**

- Twelve Monthly Board Meetings (If Meetings were not held...documentation of why?)
- Eight General Member Meetings
- Eight Industry Lunch and Learns
- Fundraisers – Enough to finance the following:
  - Pay approved Chapter operational expenses.
  - Pay or reimburse Board directors for two VAREP annual conferences (flight, room, and transportation)
  - Help local military and/or veteran families through VAREPCares
- Four VAREPCares Event – Documented (proof of how many veterans were served and impacted) and approved by VAREP National

#### **President's Circle**

- Twelve Monthly Board Meetings (If Meetings were not held...documentation of why?)
- Ten General Member Meetings
- Ten Industry Lunch and Learns
- Fundraisers – Enough to finance the following:
  - Approved Chapter operational expenses
  - Pay or reimburse Board directors for VAREP's two annual conferences (flight, room, and transportation)
  - Helping local military and/or veteran families through VAREPCares

- Six VAREPCares Event – Documented (proof of how many veterans were served and impacted) and approved by VAREP National
- One MVHC Class Taught to the Lender and Real Estate Industries

#### **Chairman's Circle**

- Twelve Monthly Board Meetings (If Meetings were not held...documentation of why?)
- Twelve General Member Meetings
- Twelve Industry Lunch and Learns
- Fundraisers – Enough to finance the following:
  - Approved Chapter operational expenses
  - Pay or reimburse Board directors for VAREP's two annual conferences (flight, room, and transportation) without VAREP National's help.
- Six VAREPCares Event – Documented (proof of how many veterans were served and impacted) and approved by VAREP National.
- Two MVHC Class Taught to the Lender and Real Estate Industries

#### **Military and Veterans Housing Certification (MVHC) Award**

- Chapters who teach a minimum of **three (3)** MVHC Classes per year to the Lender and Real Estate Industries.

#### **Fundraising Chapter Award**

- The top three (3) chapters with the most cumulative money raised in that year.

#### **Lunch & Learn Chapter Award**

- The top three (3) chapters with the most lunch & learn hosted in that year.

#### **VAREPCares Chapter Award**

- The top three (3) chapters with the most VAREPCares hosted in that year.

#### **Founder's Hall of Fame Award**

- This award is presented every three (3) years to individuals within VAREP leadership that has consistently gone above and beyond for the VAREP mission.
- Candidates may be nominated by existing and/or past VAREP leadership.
- All candidates will be vetted and voted upon by the National Board of Directors.

#### **VAREP Annual Conferences:**

- Policy Conference – Washington, D.C. – June
- National Convention – Location Changes – October

#### **Online Leadership Toolbox**

Each Board director will have access to the "Leadership Toolbox" located in the member's area of the website. It is strongly suggested that all Board directors visit this resource prior to calling VAREP National.

## **VII. BOARD DIRECTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As defined in the VAREP Bylaws, the Chapter Board is a group of appointed/elected Chapter Directors who manage the Chapter's local affairs.

### **President**

In addition to presiding over Board and Executive Committee meetings, the nonprofit Local Chapter Board President has a variety of responsibilities. As "chief volunteer," the President works with the VAREP Association Director, VAREP National President, National Board, staff, and community to further the organization's mission. A President influences how the Board uses its time, the selection of Board directors, and its future leadership. Anyone taking on this role must be committed to the organization and must understand the energy and time that will be required to do the job effectively.

The President is expected to review and understand the organization's Articles of Incorporation Bylaws, policies, and procedures; financial and legal situation; and strategic plan. As the Board's ambassador, the President acts as a spokesperson to the larger community. The President speaks in public on behalf of the organization and advocates for the cause. By modeling appropriate behavior, the President sets high standards for Board conduct and intervenes if conflicts of interest or confidentiality issues arise.

Working with the Association Director and other directors on the Local Chapter Board, the President recruits new Board directors whose vision aligns with the organization's mission. The President appoints committee chairs and serves ex officio on committees. The President is in charge of Board director performance evaluations and succession planning, and plays a crucial role in new Board director orientation.

#### **Chapter President's Responsibilities:**

- Conducts regular monthly Board meetings.
- Assigns duties to other Board directors as necessary.
- Schedules ongoing Chapter meetings and programs, both within VAREP National and in collaboration with other professional groups.
- Applies and maintains controls for budgets, expenditures, and other fiscal activities and, together with the Treasurer, is a check signer.
- Leads in the formulation of goals for the Chapter.
- Participates in monthly Chapter Leadership calls to keep abreast of VAREP as an organization nationally.
- Follow the checklist to ensure all items are properly taken care of when an acting Director joins and/or departs the Board.

### **Vice President**

The Vice President shall serve the role as the "executive officer" of the Board of Directors and shall have other duties as prescribed by the Chapter President or authorized by the Association Director.

If the office of the President should become vacant between appointments, the Vice President shall fill the vacancy and complete the unexpired term or until a new President is appointed/elected.

Note: The duties of the Local Chapter Vice President are similar to those of the President, which are listed above. Besides filling in for the President, the Vice President normally is delegated one or more responsibilities, such as fundraising or community outreach events.

**Chapter Vice President's Responsibilities:**

- Performing all duties and executing all powers of the Chapter President only in the event of the Chapter President's absence or disability.
- Assigns duties to other Board directors as necessary.
- Suggests schedules for ongoing Chapter meetings and programs, both within VAREP National and in collaboration with other professional groups.
- Perform Chapter related duties assigned by the Chapter President.

**Secretary**

The Secretary of a nonprofit organization plays a critical role in fostering communication and diligence through proper management and utilization of important records such as meeting minutes, the organization's Bylaws, Local Chapter Handbook, and Robert's Rules of Order. The secretary is responsible for submitting the Chapter Minutes to VAREP National by the 5th of every month for the prior month. If there are corrections after minutes have been submitted to National, the Secretary is responsible for uploading the final approved version upon acceptance of Board Approval.

The Secretary has wide-ranging responsibilities, requiring much more than simply being present at all Board meetings. He or she serves as an active conduit for communication by giving proper notice of any meetings and timely distribution of materials such as agendas and meeting minutes. In addition, the Secretary should be knowledgeable about the organization's records and related materials and provide advice and resources to the Board on topics such as governance issues, amendments to state laws, etc., which will assist in fulfilling his or her fiduciary duties.

As the custodian of the organization's records, the Secretary is responsible for maintaining accurate documentation and meeting any legal requirements such as annual filing deadlines. The Secretary is responsible for reviewing and updating documents as necessary and ensuring that all documents are safely stored and readily accessible. It is recommended that the Chapter establishes a place to house the documents for all directors to access; i.e.; Dropbox account or Google docs account.

The Secretary ensures that proper notification of Directors' and Members' meetings is given, as specified in the Bylaws. The Secretary manages the general correspondence of the Board of Directors except for correspondence assigned to others.

The Secretary may be designated by the Board, President and/or Bylaws as one of the signing officers for certain documents. In this capacity, the Secretary may be authorized or required to sign correspondence, applications, reports, contracts, or other documents on behalf of the organization.

**Secretary's Responsibilities:**

- Collaborates with Chapter President to finalize the meeting agenda and email to all Board Directors no later than two days prior to all scheduled Chapter Board Meetings.
- Submits all meeting minutes monthly to VAREP National by the 5th of every month for the prior month.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Chapter funds.

**Treasurer's Responsibilities:**

- Reconciling bank account
- Depositing cash and checks
- Paying bills
- Keeping track of the outgoings and incomings so that the organization knows how it is tracking in relation to the budget for any given event.
- Submitting Monthly Treasurer's Reports to VAREP National by the 5th of the month for the prior month. The reporting period for each treasurer's report will start on the 1st day of each month and will end the last day of each month.
- Reimbursing Board directors for expenses related to VAREP.
- Submitting invoice request forms to VAREP National for vendor processing.
- Collecting W9 forms for all vendors prior to paying the bills. This applies to vendors who are not "corporations" and whose payment exceeds \$600.00 in total per fiscal year. VAREP's fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

**Membership Director**

The Membership Director shall promote membership in the Chapter. He/she shall additionally be responsible for personally welcoming new members to the Chapter via telephone calls, and for member retention efforts via telephone and other personal communication.

The Membership Director is also responsible for staffing all events with the proper number of volunteers from the membership database, including community outreach events, REALTOR® educational events, fundraisers, and event booths at any function or conference that the Local Board approves.

Each Chapter handles its membership responsibilities in its own particular fashion. In general, the following responsibilities apply for the Membership Director:

- Receives and updates Chapter roster from website and VAREP National.
- Contacting and welcoming new members and sending out monthly Chapter newsletter.
- Maintaining a complete, up-to-date mailing list by adding, deleting, and changing information in accordance with information received from VAREP National.
- Producing mailing labels or email lists based on the current mailing list.
- Organizing and directing an active membership-recruiting campaign.

- Creates and presents to the Board of Directors for approval an annual business plan to grow the Chapter membership.

### **Education Director**

The Education Director prepares all of the real estate educational events for the Chapter, including arranging for the guest speaker/instructor to achieve the mission statement by ensuring that the events are empowering to the real estate practitioners within the organization.

#### **Education Director's Responsibilities:**

- Creates and presents to the Board of Directors for approval an annual business plan to educate the Chapter membership.
- Creates and presents to the Board of Directors an annual business plan to educate local real estate and lending professionals.

### **Community Outreach Director**

The Community Outreach Coordinator's primary responsibilities are to build strategic relationships with community organizations, focusing on veteran nonprofits that support the VAREP mission. These include the local VA regional office and VA hospital. The Community Outreach Director works closely with the Government Affairs Director in planning community events.

#### **Community Outreach Director's Responsibilities:**

- Ensures strong working relationships and shared goals between community organizations, including the local REALTOR® boards, to support the VAREP mission.
- Develops and maintains relationships with other veteran-focused nonprofits within the community.
- Works with the Board to develop and execute a variety of military and veteran housing and employment outreach activities annually as set out by the yearly business plan.
- Serves as a public face for the organization, attending relevant community events, meetings, and hearings on behalf of the organization and its members.
- Appoints and manage a public relations/media volunteer to write Local Chapter press releases, arrange media opportunities for events, write military and veteran editorials for local media, prepare Public Service Announcements for local radio, and appear on local radio shows to promote VAREP's mission.
- Arranges a volunteer to take pictures at all events to post on social media and the Local Chapter website.
- Arranges a video professional to record all events to post on social media and the Local Chapter website.
- Works with VAREP National staff point of contact to help create marketing flyers for educational events, luncheons, networking mixers, Business Rallies, and any other Chapter event.
- Presents to the Board any community events that the Local Chapter would benefit by participating in via booth, sponsorship, etc.
- Creates and presents to the Board of Directors an annual community outreach plan that promotes VAREP's mission and presents VAREP as the community leader in military housing and employment.

### **Government Affairs Director**

The Government Affairs Director will have responsibility for developing legislative priorities and initiatives for effectively positioning the VAREP mission and Five Point Plan with local and state government and Congress.

Government Affairs Director's Responsibilities:

- Develop relationships with local city and county government officials, including city council, mayor's office, and the county board.
- Develop relationships with state government officials serving the Chapter's areas of service, including state senators and assembly members and the governor's office.
- Develop relationships with federal government officials serving the Chapter's areas of service, including U.S. Senators and Representatives.
- Works directly with the National Legislative Committee to keep the Board up-to-date on National Legislative events.
- Presents to the Board of Directors updates including any legislative initiatives that promote VAREP's mission that include but are not limited to VAREP National Legislative Committee, local, state and federal government agencies and Congress.

Now that we know each Board director's responsibilities, let's make sure everyone is accountable.

### **Chapter Board "All-In" Checklist.**

- Does each Board director know his or her roles per the Handbook?
- Are there personal agendas besides the VAREP mission?
- Does each Board director have the time commitment?
- Does everyone have the right attitude?
- Do you have an annual business plan? If so, are you following it?
- Is there respect and is each Board director able to recognize chain of command?
- Is everyone being held accountable?
- Is each Board director able to lead without being a dictator?
- Are Board directors being driven by ego and not by the mission?
- Is there honest and effective communication?
- Is there teamwork?
- Is the Board removing disruptive and unproductive directors?

## **VIII. CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS**

Most nonprofit board work is done in meetings, either with the full board or in committees. The Chapter President is responsible for ensuring that meetings are well organized and begin and end at scheduled times. Nothing damages Board effectiveness more than poorly organized meetings that do not stay on topic and continue late into the night.

### **Quorum**

A quorum is the minimum number of directors who must be present for the meeting to be conducted. The VAREP Local Chapter quorum is defined as a “majority” of the Board directors, who must be physically present or attending via conference call at a given meeting.

**Note:** While in-person is preferred, a quorum can be achieved from a combination of in-person and board directors on a conference call. Video teleconference Board meetings are not authorized to take the place of monthly face-to-face Board meetings.

### **Plan and Set Goals for the Meeting**

- Find a comfortable and convenient meeting place, preferably a standing meeting.
- Determine the purpose of the meeting and its date, time, and location so that Board directors can plan ahead and schedule meetings in their personal calendars.
- Consult with other Board directors to finalize the agenda.
- Prioritize issues to be discussed and prepare adequately.
- Research information necessary to make important decisions.
- Be sure to provide advance written notice (by email is permitted) to all Board directors, pursuant to Bylaw requirements.
- Be sure to communicate appropriately to any Advisory/Committee Chair that should attend the meeting to present updates on projects.
- Make sure all board directors bring a written report of their duties to be presented at the meeting.

### **Meeting Notes**

- Ensure minutes are being taken or a recording is being made by the Secretary.

### **Facilitating the Meeting**

- Introduce yourself, the Chapter Board of Directors and welcome any members and guests.
- Ensure that you or your parliamentarian observes Robert's Rules of Order as a guide in conducting the meeting.
- Review the agenda for the meeting: consider business topics, pending issues, and timing and revise as necessary.
- Set ground rules for the meeting, including the expectation that everyone participate, that no judgmental statements be made during brainstorming sessions, and that there be an ending time for each segment of the meeting.
- Pace the meeting and observe specified time limits for agenda items. This will allow everyone a chance to speak and help ensure that all issues on the agenda are covered.

- Participants should respect the meeting facilitator and not speak unless recognized to do so.

### **Voting**

- Only VAREP Board directors have voting power, with one (1) vote each.
- Committee Board members do not have voting privileges.
- Members and Guests do not have voting privileges.
- Votes by the majority of the quorum are considered sufficient to pass the motion. Verbal votes or a show of hands can be used for minor issues, but more important or controversial issues may be voted on by ballot. Voting methods are at the discretion of the meeting facilitator.
- Motions and Votes must be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary exactly as stated and voted upon.

### **Who Can Participate**

- Board of Directors, General Members, Committee Chairs, and invited guests may attend Open session meetings. Only voting board directors may attend closed or executive sessions meetings such as voting for board positions.

### **Stick to the Agenda**

- Don't allow people to wander off topic. Some agendas set the time allowed for discussion after each item. You don't have to do this, but if your meetings have been veering off course, setting time limits may help control them.

### **Follow Robert's Rules of Order as a guide**

- You don't need to be overly formal in your meetings (many Board meetings are very casual), but having a basic understanding of when to make a motion and when to call the question is helpful.

### **Quick Reference Table**

TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	May you interrupt speaker?	May you be seconded?	Is the motion debatable?	Vote Required
Adjourn the meeting	I move that we adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority
Recess the meeting	I move that we recess until...	No	Yes	No	Majority

Complain about noise, room, temperature, etc.	Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No Vote
Suspend further consideration of something	I move that the motion be laid on the table	No	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	2/3 Vote
Postpone consideration of something	I move we postpone this matter until...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Have something studied further	I move to refer the motion to the committee	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	I move to amend...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Object to procedure or a personal affront	Point of order	Yes	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No Vote

Object to the consideration of some irrelevant matter	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	2/3 Vote
Take up a matter previously tabled	I move to take from the table	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	I move to reconsider...	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider a vote of an item out of its scheduled order	I move we suspend the rules and consider...	No	Yes	No	2/3 Vote
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	I appeal the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

### Bring Closure

- Come to some closure, decision, or resolution on key issues and in some cases agree to table the discussion to a later date or more appropriate time.
- Prepare an action plan.
- Summarize main points and establish what and how follow-up will be accomplished.
- Plan the next meeting (set date, place, and time and develop a preliminary agenda).

### Thank Your Board

- Board Directors are volunteers who give time and money to your organization. Take every opportunity during meetings to make sure they're appreciated. Mention their names, when appropriate, in newsletters and media releases. Small gifts are sometimes useful but don't be extravagant. You don't want to be accused of wasting the organization's money.

### Robert's Rules of Order

- These are generally accepted meeting standards based on parliamentary procedure. They are required by VAREP for conducting Board Meetings.

### Keeping Meeting Minutes

Minute writing is an art and the level of detail and format of minutes will vary with a variety of factors. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that accurate meeting minutes are taken and approved.

### **What to Include**

Robert's Rules of Order, a manual for running nonprofit organizations, explains that minutes are a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said. At a minimum, minutes should include:

- Name and kind of meeting. Is it a regular Board meeting, an annual meeting, a meeting of the Housing Committee, or a special meeting? If it is a special meeting, attach a copy of the meeting notice given to members.
- Date, place, and beginning and ending times of the meeting.
- Names of the Chair and Secretary or their substitutes.
- Names of voting directors attending and whether a quorum was present. You may circulate a sign-in sheet and attach it to the minutes.
- Names of guests and their subject matter.
- Whether minutes from the previous meeting were approved or corrected.
- Motions made.

### **You must record:**

- The exact wording of the motion.
- Who made the motion?
- The result of the vote.
- Reports. Record the name of the report, the name of the director presenting it, and any action taken on the report. If the report was in writing, attach it, or tell where it may be found. An oral report may be summarized briefly.
- Other actions, assignments and deadlines, resolutions, and recommendations can be briefly recorded.

The Secretary signs the minutes once they have been approved. This copy must be maintained in the Local Chapter records and must be submitted to VAREP National by the 5th of the month for the prior month.

### **Meeting Substance**

- Specify issues discussed, including names of presenters.
  - Note any materials distributed.
  - List or summarize major points of discussion in matters considered.
- Clearly state decisions/actions taken.
  - Include any resolutions adopted.
  - Indicate names of Directors voting against or abstaining on a resolution, or who are not present at the time of the vote.
  - When a conflict-of-interest situation is being dealt with by the Board, indicate whether the Director with the conflict was present for some or all of the discussion or action.
  - If no resolution was adopted, indicate whether there was consensus on the topic, or whether matter was deferred or informally tabled.
- Identify information items and reports received.

- Include name of report or item and topics covered.
  - Include list of materials distributed, if any.
  - Include names of individuals (and, if applicable, their positions, such as Committee Chair) giving oral reports.
- Indicate whether an executive session was held.

### **What to Leave Out**

- The minutes are a factual record of business. Do not include:
  - Opinions or judgments: Leave out statements like "a well-done report" or "a heated discussion."
  - Criticism or accolades: Criticism, good or bad, of directors should not be included unless it takes the form of an official motion. Thanks or expressions of appreciation should be included only if there was a clear consensus of meeting participants (for example, by applause).
  - Discussion: If the organization has opted to include discussion summaries, do not personalize it by recording the views of individuals.
  - Extended rehashing of reports: Just hit the highlights or key facts, particularly if a written report is attached.

### **What to avoid**

- Tape recording of the meeting.
- Taking notes that attempt to capture every word.
- Waiting for weeks to do initial drafts or to send out for review.

### **Approving the Minutes**

- Minutes do not become official until they are read and approved by formal vote. They should be read by the Secretary at the next regular meeting. The Chair then asks for corrections and additions, and calls for a vote.
- Board Directors may agree to skip reading the minutes aloud if members have had enough time to read them in advance. Send a draft of the minutes to directors before the meeting. This is a good way to save time while also helping directors prepare for the meeting.

### **Confidential Items**

- Occasionally a meeting calls for confidentiality, such as when sensitive personnel matters are being handled. In that case, the Board excuses general members and guests.

## **IX. BOARD DIRECTOR MANAGEMENT**

Board Director management is crucial to carrying out the VAREP mission. Although this is a volunteer organization, Board directors have taken an oath to serve and are held to higher standards.

### **Board Director Conflict-of-Interest Policy**

The purpose of a conflict-of-interest policy is to protect an organization's interests when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of one of its officers or directors, or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest.

#### **Definitions**

1. **Interested Person.** An Interested Person is any Director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect Financial Interest, as defined below.
2. **Financial Interest.** A person has a Financial Interest if the individual has, directly or indirectly, any actual or potential ownership, investment, or compensation arrangement with VAREP or with any entity that conducts transactions with VAREP.

**Note:** A Financial Interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest in all cases. Under Article III, Section 2 of IRS Form 1023, a person with a Financial Interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

#### **Procedures**

1. **Duty to disclose.** In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an Interested Person must disclose the existence of the Financial Interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of the committees with governing board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. In an effort to aid such disclosure, each member (board, committee, or staff) shall complete a conflict-of-interest questionnaire as circumstances warrant, but no less frequently than annually.
2. **Determining whether a conflict of interest exists.** The Board shall review each member questionnaire and any other disclosures regarding the Financial Interests of its members. After disclosure of the Financial Interest, the Interested Person shall leave the board meeting while the remaining Board directors discuss and vote on whether a conflict of interest exists.
3. **Procedures for addressing the conflict of interest.** After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the organization can obtain with reasonable effort a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not produce a conflict of interest. The Interested Person shall not be present in the room during the determination. If an alternative transaction or arrangement is not possible, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the organization, for its own benefit, and fair and reasonable. Based on these determinations, the board or committee shall make its decision on whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. **Disciplinary action.** If the Board of Directors has reason to believe an individual has failed to disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest, it will inform the director and allow him/her to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If the Board of Directors still has reason to believe a conflict of interest exists after the alleged conflict is explained, it will take corrective action, including removing the person from the Board.

### **Guidelines for Removing a Board Director**

Occasionally a Board director may need to be removed from the Board for reasons such as a conflict of interest, unethical behavior, or behavior that has become so obstructive that the Board is prevented from functioning effectively.

Below are some reasons to remove a Board director:

- Actions detrimental to the VAREP branding and mission
- Misuse of financial funds
- Disruptive behavior toward other Board directors and/or sponsors.
- Unproductive or irresponsible
- Puts personal agenda above VAREP mission.
- Misses two or more Board meetings (unexcused) or four meetings per year (excused or not).

**Note:** The best Boards often have strongly felt disagreements and heated arguments. Challenging groupthink and arguing for an unpopular viewpoint are not grounds for getting rid of a Board director. However, if a Board director consistently disrupts meetings or is otherwise destructive or demoralizes others, it may be appropriate to consider removing the individual from the Board.

### **Way to Remove a Board Director**

1. **Personal intervention.** Intervention by the Board President or other Board leadership is a less formal solution to managing problem Board directors. If a Board director has failed to attend several meetings in a row, or has become an impediment to the Board's work, the Chapter President can meet informally with the Board director in question. The conversation can occur in person or on the telephone, and the Chapter President can specifically request a resignation.

**Note:** If, after intervention, the Board director decides it is best to resign, ideally the Board director should send a short email of resignation to the Chapter President. The Chapter President will respond and accept the resignation. The Chapter President will present the resignation at the next Board meeting and it will become official in the minutes.

2. **Impeachment.** If personal intervention does not work, a Board director can be removed by a majority vote of the Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

**Note:** Documentation of the conversations between the Chapter President and the non-performing Board director must accompany the impeachment. Prior to the impeachment vote, a call with the Association Director and VAREP National is necessary. If necessary, the Association Director will conduct

a formal investigation by speaking with the allegedly “non-performing” Board director and other Board directors. The Association Director shall document his or her findings in a simple report to support the impeachment procedure or to prescribe other corrective action.

3. **Term limits.** Term limits provide a non-confrontational way to ease ineffective Board directors from serving on the Board. Just don’t accept the Board of Directors Application once their term is up.

### **Alcohol Policy**

VAREP is a professional organization and we must conduct ourselves in such manner. Please adhere to local, state, and federal alcohol laws.

Below are guidelines to follow:

- Alcohol must never be served to minors at any VAREP event.
- A maximum of two drink tickets should be used during any mixer or happy hour.
- Board directors may never get drunk at a VAREP event!
- When serving alcohol during an event, provide all attendees with a flyer providing the names of three taxi services to be used if needed.
- Announce the flyer and the ride share or taxi services available to the audience.

### **VAREP Code of Conduct**

- A. All members accept responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the integrity and reputation of the Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals (VAREP). Members shall respect all persons by way of proper conduct in the best interests of the organization and are expected to behave with maturity and exhibit good conduct at all times during VAREP National and local events. Members shall:
  - i. Support the mission of the Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals.
  - ii. Promote the positive reputation of VAREP and take all possible steps to prevent our organization and any members from being brought into disrepute. Members shall respect all persons by way of proper conduct in the best interests of the organization.
  - iii. Adhere to our Instruments of Governance which include but are not limited to the VAREP Bylaws, policies, procedures, agreements and guidelines.
  - iv. Serve the members, the military and veteran communities.
  - v. Set an example for others and maintain the highest character, integrity to enhance the morale of VAREP.

- vi. Not take any action which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate, degrade, disrespect, bring disgrace, embarrass, or discriminate against the organization, any member, the military or veteran communities.
- B. This Code of Conduct is intended to apply to all members participating in any VAREP sanctioned event, hosted by VAREP National and / or any VAREP affiliated member city. VAREP sanctioned events are presently defined as the Annual Policy Conference held in Washington, D.C., the Annual VAREP National Convention, and any National or Local Chapter meetings and events.
- C. VAREP Members who witness such acts should take immediate action steps to intervene when safe to do so. These action steps should include face-to-face conversation between the appropriate, responsible parties with the intent of resolving the conflict or code violation. Unresolved matters that cannot be handled through conversation shall immediately be reported to a member of the Chapter Board of Directors, who will be the body given authority to promptly investigate and work to resolve the matter with National.
- D. Any member who is found by the National or Local Chapter Board to be in violation of the VAREP Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action up-to-and-including but not limited to termination of membership, removal, suspension and / or expulsion from VAREP.

### **National Grievance Escalation Guidelines**

Chapter issues that violate guidelines set forth in this handbook and cannot be resolved at the chapter level, may be escalated to VAREP National.

In most cases, the following criteria must be met prior to national grievance escalation:

- The issue or board director in question has violated the guidelines in the handbook;
- The issue has been addressed during a board meeting with no resolution; and
- The chapter has involved the Association Director and the issue could not be resolved.

#### **Step 1:**

If the above criteria have been met, the Chapter Secretary must submit a "National Grievance Escalation Request" in writing via email or letter sent to VAREP National detailing the issue(s).

#### **Step 2:**

Upon Request, the National Grievance Committee (comprised of three (3) members) will investigate the issues by interviews, data collection, and financial reviews. The National Grievance Committee will present their findings and recommendations in one written report and give an oral presentation to the National Board of Directors. The National Board of Directors will discuss the report and vote on resolution for the chapter.

**Note:** The investigation will be completed no later than 14 days upon receipt of written request.

**Step 3:**

The National Board Chairman along with the Association Director will have a conference call with the local chapter board to share the outcome. All decisions made by the National Board of Directors are final and effective immediately after the conference call.

**Moving Forward...**

After resolution is delivered to the chapter, the chapter board will resume working with the Association Director to move the chapter and mission forward.

**Note:** The total process for this is no longer than 30 days from receipt of written request. During this time, the Chapter will be suspended from all activity.

**VAREP Logo Branding Policy**

VAREP members are allowed to download and use the VAREP logo; however, they must follow the guidelines below.

**VAREP Logo Guidelines:**

- The VAREP Logo should be preceded by or include the statement “A member, support, or sponsor of the Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals.”
- The VAREP logo should be small in size and not dominate the ad. Should comply with and meet advertisement criteria compliance requirements.
- The VAREP logo and our mission statement should not be used as part of a member’s personal ad in a way that suggests VAREP National put out the ad.
- The VAREP logo should not be used in any manner to imply to consumers that VAREP is a lender, mortgage company, or real estate company.
- The VAREP logo must never be used personally to get a “nonprofit” discount on any personal advertising.
- VAREP members DO NOT have the right to use the VAREP logo to imply that VAREP National is endorsing them in any way.
- In addition, the VAREP logo should never be used with any advertising in any manner to imply to consumers that VAREP National has approved the member’s message.

### **VAREP Marketing Materials Policy**

VAREP marketing materials such as brochures, pop-ups, and banners should be used only for VAREP official events.

#### **Marketing Guidelines**

- VAREP Banner, Table Throw, and Pop-Ups may be used only for VAREP Board-approved events and are not for personal use.
- VAREP Brochures, Tri-folds, and Folders are to be used only during VAREP-sanctioned events and are not for personal use.
- Board directors and Committee members are allowed to hand out VAREP marketing materials only during VAREP events and not during personal events.
- VAREP General Members may not call VAREP National to order marketing materials without the approval of the Board.

**Note:** ALL Chapter marketing design is centralized and must come from VAREP National. Chapters are not allowed to purchase URLs, domain names, apps or engage in any other form of event marketing without the consent of VAREP National.

### **Social Media**

VAREP National will create a Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts for each Chapter. The Chapter will designate a person within the Chapter to be the administrator and will provide VAREP National with the administrator's name.

### **Documenting Live Events**

Chapters will gain the credibility by carrying out the mission and conducting the required events. However, documenting the events will provide an even stronger message. Each Chapter is responsible for photographic or video documentation of live events and for sending it to VAREP National for video production.

### **Video Production**

Chapters will reach out to the VAREP National Media Director to help facilitate a local videographer. VAREP National can help with the research and coordination. After the video recording is completed, the videographer will email the raw footage to VAREP National for editing and production.

### **Email Blast**

Chapters are not allowed to purchase email lists for marketing. Chapters are allowed to email only VAREP members and to work from lists that VAREP has organically grown.

### **Business Cards**

Each Board director will be provided a VAREP business card. For uniformity, the design is standard for everyone (no exceptions). The title on the card is "Board member." VAREP National will not waste money ordering new cards each time Board positions change.

### **Annual Chapter Report Card**

- Conducted by the Association Director with the Chapter President.
- Based upon the Chapter's event evaluation reports.
- A useful tool for peak performance.
- All Chapter report cards must be turned in to VAREP National by December 15 for the previous year.
- A coaching and training opportunity.
- VAREP National will use Chapter report cards for Leadership Awards.

### **Board Director Succession**

- Founding Boards are appointed (typically, 40–50 percent of Founding Board directors resign for various reasons within one year of being established).
- Successive Boards are a hybrid of appointed and elected.
- Board directors can serve in the same position for no more than two consecutive terms.
- Board directors can still remain on the Board and serve in a different Board position.
- Committee Members who have successfully served are immediately considered for an available Board position.

### **Chapter President Replacement Guidelines**

- All existing Board Directors have the right to serve as President.
- Committee member must serve as a voting Board director for at least one year prior to being appointed/elected to Chapter President.
- Interested Board directors must make it known in a Board meeting that they are interested or by emailing all Directors & Association Director.
- The Board will hold a special "Chapter President Election" meeting for voting Board directors only. The Association Director will attend this meeting.
- The interested parties are required to prepare a written statement, no longer than one page, outlining their past Chapter contributions and vision for the Board moving forward. This is to be submitted to the Board.
- Interested parties will have an opportunity to give a 20-minute oral presentation to the Board directors to accompany their written submission.
- Interested parties will then remove themselves from the meeting room for Board discussion and voting and will not participate in the voting process.
- The vacating Chapter President can vote.
- Every Director has one vote, including those Directors running for President.
- Candidates wait outside and can be called in to answer any questions the Board may have.
- After voting, candidates will be notified in person or by phone; however, they must receive an official notice by the outgoing Chapter President as to whether they are accepted or rejected.
- A vacating President can serve in a different position on the Board, but must also serve as "Immediate Past President" in an advisory role for the incoming President.

### **Interim-President Succession Guidelines**

- Interim Presidents are appointed by the vacating Chapter President and approved by the Association Director and/or VAREP National.
- Interim Presidents are only obligated to fulfill the remaining term of the vacating Chapter President or until a new President is elected.
- If the Interim President wants to continue as Chapter President after fulfilling the term, he/she must refer to the Chapter President Succession guidelines.

#### **Written Business Plan**

- Due annually on November 15 to Association Director and VAREP National.
- Chapter President and the entire Board will schedule a conference call with the Association Director to review the business plan.
- Any revisions after the conference call will be made and the business plan will be used as the yardstick by which the Chapter's success for the upcoming year.
- Begin to contact and send out "Sponsorship Packages" in the month of December.

#### **Online Leadership Toolbox**

Each Board director will have access to the "Leadership Toolbox" located in the member's area of the website. It is strongly suggested that all Board directors visit this resource prior to calling in to VAREP National.

The following items can be found in the Leadership Toolbox:

- VAREP Handbook
- Business Card Request Form
- Vendor Invoice Request Form
- Event Request Form
- Reimbursement Form
- Treasurer's Sample Reports
- IRS 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Tax-Exempt Letter
- Donor Letter Template
- W9 Blank Fillable Forms
- VAREP W9 for Current Year
- Lunch and Learn Template and PowerPoint Presentations
- Veterans Housing Summit Template
- Golf Fundraiser Template
- VAREPCares Template and Approval Request Form
- Embroidery Logo
- VAREP Volunteer T-Shirt Design
- Business Plan Template
- Sponsorship Letter Template
- Annual Sponsorship Package Sample

## **X. CHAPTER FINANCES**

### **VAREP Fiscal Year**

January 1–December 31

### **VAREP Annual National Dues from Local Chapter**

Each Local Chapter will pay 10% of its gross income within the fiscal year, with an annual cap of \$5,000, to help offset centralized Local Chapter support services, including all marketing, design, and Local Chapter web development support.

Example 1: Through donations, grants, fundraiser, and sponsorships, Local Chapter raises a total of \$20,000 to operate and host events.

Payment calculation:  $\$20,000 \times 10\% = \$2,000$

Payment to VAREP National: \$2,000

Example 2: Through donations, grants, fundraiser, and sponsorships, Local Chapter raises a total of \$60,000 to operate and host events.

Payment calculation:  $\$60,000 \times 10\% = \$6,000$

Payment to VAREP National: \$5,000\*

\*Per the above policy.

### **VAREP Local Chapter Membership Dues**

Local Chapters MAY NOT charge a Membership Fee.

### **Local Chapter Bank Account**

Each Local Chapter shall set up a bank account approved by VAREP National. There will be four signers on the account.

- Son Nguyen – President
- Dustin Luce – Co-Founder
- Chapter President
- Chapter Treasurer

Note: Each Chapter is operated under the VAREP National EIN 45-2458485. VAREP National must have access to the Local Chapter accounts for monthly/yearly auditing, P&L preparation, and tax filing. All deposits and withdrawals of monies from the Local Chapter account must be approved by the Local Board, and recorded in the monthly Treasurer's Report and Secretary's meeting minutes as a paper trail.

### **Financial Reporting Guidelines**

The VAREP fiscal year is January 1 through December 31. Monthly reports are due by the 5th of every month for the prior month. The reporting period for each treasurer's report will start on the 1st day of each month and will end the last day of each month.

**Monthly Reporting.** The Treasurer's report details the Local Chapter's financial activity for the past month. You should present a "Monthly Treasurer's Report" for the Board's approval at the monthly Board meeting. After the Board has reviewed your Treasurer's report and verified that it is reconciled with the bank statement, a member moves to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion is seconded and the Board votes on the motion. If the motion is approved, the Secretary enters the Treasurer's report into the minutes. All bank statements, bills, Monthly Treasurer's Reports, annual summary financial reports, and receipt books become part of the Local Chapter's permanent records. In addition, these records will be given to and kept by VAREP National.

### **Chapter Financial Reserves**

Fiscal stability is important for all nonprofit organizations. Sound financial management includes the practice and discipline of maintaining adequate reserve funds for known and unknown contingencies. The establishment of prudent financial reserve policies is important to ensure the long-term financial health of the Chapter.

For this purpose, VAREP NATIONAL issues the following guidelines regarding financial reserves:

- Chapters in existence for more than 1 year should maintain a reserve of no less than \$5,000.
- Chapters in existence for more than 1 year should maintain a reserve of no less than \$10,000.
- Chapters in existence for more than 2 years should maintain a reserve of no less than \$15,000

### **Third-Party Vendor W9**

If your Chapter pays a vendor more than \$600 in calendar year with checks, you need to obtain a W-9 from them. If you pay them with the Chapter debit card, then a W-9 is not required. It is much easier to get the W-9 before paying the vendor. It is best practice to ask for the W-9 upfront when you hire them. Also, please request a W-9 from another non-profit organization when your chapter donates more than \$5,000 in a calendar year through your VAREPCares philanthropic program. Just as we provide our W-9 to our sponsors, other non-profits should be able to do the same. It is a reporting requirement on our annual return filed with the IRS.

### **VAREP Fundraiser Receipt**

You will also see the "VAREP Fundraiser Receipt" form listed in the Tool Box. Please use this when your chapter receives a donation of more than \$75 where the contributor has received or will receive something of value in return for their donation. This is an IRS quid pro quo requirement placed upon 501(c)3 non-profits to quell people from claiming too much of a charitable deduction on their tax returns. For example, your chapter sells tickets for an annual gala for \$100 per person. In exchange, they receive dinner and a band or DJ is provided for entertainment. You must make a good faith estimate of the value of the dinner and entertainment provided. This is done by asking the restaurant or caterer and the band or DJ what their normal rates are, not the often-discounted rate that is given to charity organizations. This applies to golf tournaments, silent auctions, and event sponsorships as well. Your chapter will, hopefully, receive many event sponsorships. If any complimentary tickets, spots in golf tournaments, receptions for major donors, distribution or display of the sponsor's services (other than just their name) at the event, etc. are given to the sponsor, then a good faith estimate needs to be

disclosed. Please do not advertise for your sponsor or allow your sponsor to include messages containing price information or other indications of savings. That is considered advertising instead of a charitable sponsorship, and thereby, becomes taxable to our organization.

### **Local Gaming Laws**

Please be aware of local regulations and work with your fundraising chairperson when events include gambling. Although gambling is illegal in most states, most allow an exception for our type of non-profit. Every state has different rules, but most make you register prior to an event. The general consensus of what constitutes gambling is whether or not it is a game of chance or a game of skill. Games of skill like golf tournaments and darts are not considered gambling; and, therefore, NOT regulated by states. Games of chance like raffles, bingo, poker runs, and casino nights are regulated by most states and will likely need to be registered or an exception filed with your state or local government. Here is a link to a help you with the regulations in your state:

<https://www.harborcompliance.com/information/charitable-gaming-license>

In addition to state regulations, the federal government has something to say about gaming activities and prizes. If your Chapter pays out prizes, a W-2G may need to be issued to the winner and filed with the IRS. The threshold for raffle prizes is \$600 or more of cash or value or 300 times the amount of the wager. For Bingo and Keno, the threshold is \$1500. For poker tournaments, the threshold is \$5000.

### **Alternatives to Gambling**

An alternative to a raffle is door prizes. If the price of attendance includes a chance to win a prize where everyone attending an event is eligible to win a prize drawing, then it's a door prize, not a raffle. Tickets sold separately from the price of attendance are considered a raffle.

Minnesota has suggested an alternative to poker runs; roving dart tournaments where a participant throws a dart at each location and the person who throws the best score wins a prize at the last stop. This is a game of skill rather than a game of chance, therefore, not gambling.

## **XI. REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The Board of Directors of VAREP, Inc., DBA Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals (VAREP) recognizes that Board Directors, officers, and employees (personnel) of VAREP, Inc., may be required to travel or incur expenses from time to time to conduct business on behalf of VAREP or to further its mission. **All purchases should be approved by the Chapter Board of Directors prior to incurring an expense on behalf of the Chapter.**

The purposes of this policy are:

- To ensure that adequate cost controls are in place.
- To ensure that travel and other expenditures are appropriate.
- To provide a uniform and consistent approach for the timely reimbursement of authorized expenses incurred by personnel. It is the policy of VAREP to reimburse only reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred.

VAREP expects personnel incurring business expenses to exercise discretion and good business judgment with respect to those expenses, to be cost-conscious, and to spend VAREP's money as carefully and judiciously as possible.

### **Expense Report**

Expenses will not be reimbursed unless the personnel requesting reimbursement submits a written expense report. The expense report, shall be submitted at least monthly or within 30 days of the completion of travel or the event venue. The expense reimbursement, must include:

- The completed VAREP Expense Reimbursement Form:
  - Individual's name
  - (If reimbursement for travel is requested) The date, origin, destination, and purpose of the trip, including a description of activities during the trip
- The names and affiliations of all people for whom expenses are claimed; i.e., people on whom money is spent in order to conduct VAREP's business (VAREP will not pay for or reimburse companion travel under any circumstances unless it is spent in order to conduct VAREP's business)
- An itemized list of all expenses for which reimbursement is requested, with receipts as described below

### **Receipts**

- Receipts are required for all expenditures billed directly or indirectly to VAREP.
- No expense will be reimbursed to personnel unless the person requesting reimbursement submits with the expense report a receipt from each vendor. The receipt must include the vendor's name, a description of services provided, the date, and the total expenses, including tips.

### **General Travel Requirements**

- All travel must be approved by a VAREP National officer for all staff travel. In the case of a VAREP Local Chapter, all travel involving air travel or at least one overnight stay and any out-of-state travel must be approved by the Chapter President or Treasurer and approved in advance by the majority of the Board through voting (recorded in the meeting minutes).
- Personal and Spousal Travel Expenses. Personnel traveling on behalf of VAREP may incorporate personal travel or business with their VAREP trips; however, personnel shall not arrange travel at a time that is less advantageous to VAREP or involving any greater expense to VAREP incurred as a result of personal travel, including but not limited to extra hotel nights or additional stopovers, meals, or transportation, which are the sole responsibility of the individual and will not be reimbursed by VAREP. VAREP shall not reimburse expenses associated with the travel of an individual's spouse, family, or friends.

### **Air Travel**

- General. Air travel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of reduced airfares. VAREP, Inc. will reimburse or pay only the cost of the lowest coach class fare actually available for direct, non-stop flights from the airport nearest the person's home or office to the airport nearest the destination.
- Saturday Stays. Personnel traveling on behalf of VAREP are not required to stay over Saturday nights in order to reduce the price of an airline ticket. Personnel who choose to stay over a Saturday night shall be reimbursed for reasonable lodging and meal expenses incurred over the weekend to the extent the expenses incurred do not exceed the difference between the price of the Saturday-night-stay ticket and the price of the lowest-price-available ticket that would not include a Saturday-night stay. To receive reimbursement for such lodging and meal expenses, personnel must supply, along with the expense report, documentation of the amount of the difference between the price of the Saturday-night-stay and the non-Saturday-night-stay airline tickets.
- Frequent Flyer Miles and Compensation for Denied Boarding. Personnel traveling on behalf of VAREP may accept and retain frequent flyer miles and compensation for denied boarding for their personal use. Personnel may not deliberately patronize a single airline to accumulate frequent flyer miles if less expensive comparable tickets are available on another airline.

### **Lodging**

Personnel traveling on behalf of VAREP may be reimbursed at the single-room rate for the reasonable cost of hotel accommodations. Convenience, the cost of staying in the city in which the hotel is located, and proximity to other venues on the person's itinerary shall be considered in determining reasonableness. Personnel shall make use of available corporate and discount rates for hotels.

### **Out-of-Town Meals**

Personnel traveling on behalf of VAREP are reimbursed for the reasonable and actual cost of meals (including reasonable tips).

### **Personal Vehicles**

Personnel will be compensated for use of their personal vehicles when used for business travel for VAREP. When personnel use their personal vehicles for such travel, including travel to and from the airport, mileage will be allowed at the currently approved IRS rate per mile. In the case of personnel using their personal cars to take a trip that would normally be made by air, mileage will be allowed at the currently approved rate; however, the total mileage reimbursement will not exceed the sum of the lowest available round-trip coach airfare.

### **Parking/Tolls**

Parking and toll expenses, including charges for hotel parking, incurred by personnel travel on behalf of VAREP for business purposes will be reimbursed. The costs of parking tickets, fines, car washes, valet service, etc., are the responsibility of personnel and will not be reimbursed. On-airport parking is permitted for short business trips. For extended trips, personnel should use off-airport facilities.

### **Entertainment, Business Meetings, and Events**

Reasonable expenses incurred for business meetings or other types of business-related entertainment will be reimbursed only if the expenditures are approved in advance by the Director of VAREP and qualify as tax-deductible expenses.

Detailed documentation for any such expense must be provided, including:

- Date and place of entertainment
- Nature of expense
- Names, titles, and corporate affiliations of those entertained.
- A complete description of the business purpose for the activity, including the specific business matter discussed
- Vendor receipts, not credit card receipts or statements, showing the vendor's name, a description of the services provided, the date, and the total expenses, including tips (if applicable)

### **Other Expenses**

Reasonable business-related telephone and fax charges due to absence of personnel from the individual's place of business are reimbursable. In addition, reasonable and necessary gratuities that are not covered under meals may be reimbursed. Finally, reasonable emergency secretarial work and/or postal charges incurred are reimbursable for the purpose of work on behalf of VAREP.

### **Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

VAREP maintains a strict policy that expenses in any category that could be perceived as lavish or excessive will not be reimbursed, as such expenses are inappropriate for reimbursement by a nonprofit, charitable VAREP.

Expenses that are not reimbursable include, but are not limited to:

- First-class tickets or upgrades, unless the upgrade is at no additional charge
- Any travel insurance

- When lodging accommodations have been arranged by VAREP and the individual elects to stay elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by VAREP. Reimbursement shall not be made for transportation between alternate lodging and the meeting site.
- Discretionary spending accounts are prohibited. All expense reimbursements under accountable plans are as defined by the IRS.
- Liquor or bar costs, unless liquor (or alcohol) is consumed with a meal, but only if such consumption is both moderate and reasonable.
- Membership dues at any country club, private club, athletic club, golf club, tennis club or similar recreational clubs.
- Spa, health club, or other social club charges. If payment is made, VAREP will report as compensation on the W-2 of the person receiving the benefit.
- Any tax obligations of an officer, director, employee, or trustee under any circumstances.
- Any personal services. VAREP will not pay or reimburse personal services to employees unless these services are provided to all employees on a nondiscriminatory basis under a qualified employee benefit plan. "Personal services" are any services for the personal benefit of a listed person or the family or friends of a listed person, whether provided regularly (on a full-time or part-time basis) or as needed, whether provided by an employee of VAREP or independent contractor (and whether the independent contractor is an individual or a VAREP employee). They include, but are not limited to, services of a babysitter, bodyguard, butler, chauffeur, chef, concierge or other person who regularly runs non-incidental personal errands, escort, financial planner, handyman, landscaper, lawyer, maid, masseur/masseuse, nanny, personal trainer, personal advisor or counselor, pet sitter, physician or other medical specialist, tax preparer, and tutor for non-business purposes.
- Expenses for companion travel under any circumstances.
- Overnight retreats without the prior approval of the Director.

## **XII. EVENT MANAGEMENT**

### **Industry Lunch and Learns**

Throughout the year, VAREP Local Chapters will hold Real Estate Lunch and Learns, where Real Estate Professionals, lenders, and housing professionals participate in the education programs on military- and veteran-related housing topics. Topics include but are not limited to home loan preapprovals, down payment assistance, and the VA home loan program.

### **Fundraisers**

Throughout the year, VAREP National and Local Chapters host charity events, including but not limited to:

- Stars and Stripes Golf Tournament
- Mud Run / 5K to 10K Fun Run
- Casino Night
- Dinner Gala with Silent Auction

**Note:** The purpose of a fundraiser is to fund Chapter operational expenses and travel expenses in order to support the VAREP mission for participating Board directors as a voice for veteran homeownership, and to host annual VAREPCares philanthropy event(s).

### **VAREPCares**

Each Chapter is required to do a VAREPCares event yearly for a veteran family or families in need. The Chapter chooses a cause or specific family to help. The Chapter secures approval from VAREP National and helps the local veteran family in its time of need.

### **Standards for Hosting Events**

Chapters should incorporate the following quality standards into the planning process for all Chapter events.

First Sergeant/Project Manager and Committee Chairs:

- Each event must have a First Sergeant to oversee and be responsible for the event.
- A First Sergeant oversees a committee made up of other Board directors and/or VAREP general members.
- The committee is under the leadership of a Committee Chair working with the First Sergeant.
- The committee must utilize VAREP National's templates for the events, make a plan, and develop a budget.
- The First Sergeant and Committee Chair members are responsible for communicating activities on a progress report to be presented at the monthly Board meeting.
- First Sergeants, Committee Chairs, and committee members may not make major decisions, especially financial ones, without Board approval.
- First Sergeants and Committee Chair are responsible for presenting a performance report to the Board during the Board meeting after the event. The report should include sustainments and improvements for future like events to use as a reference for future committee members.

Relevant topics: The theme of the event and content covered must be aligned with the organization's mission and add value to the community or member.

- **Cultural connection:** A significant part of VAREP's value proposition is the military and veteran cultural connection and sense of community members experience when attending events, whether on a Local Chapter or national basis. Each event must intentionally seek to include elements that tie into the organization's mission. This can be accomplished with music, food, type of speakers, programming content, etc.
- **Fun:** Time and again, members reflect on the “fun” element of events as a primary driver in what keeps them coming back to VAREP events and what differentiates VAREP from other associations, conferences, and events at which they can spend their time and funds. Keep your events fun and lively via high-quality programming and the military and veteran cultural connection. Procure well-prepared speakers, presenters, and others who will inject that professionally appropriate element of fun into the event.
- **High-quality venue:** Not every event can or should take place at a luxury hotel, but ALL events should feel high quality to the member and participants. Staff can assist with venue selection based on budgetary needs, review of available event photos, etc. As the local “boots on the ground,” plan ahead to conduct a site visit of any potential venues to ensure cleanliness, ease of access to a majority of members, high-quality facilities in the venue, etc.
- **Great speakers:** The Chapter Board will make a significant effort to schedule an outstanding program, the key feature of which is the speakers.
  - Once you've decided on a topic or theme for the event, begin reaching out as early as possible to determine speaker availability. Select speakers who are not only authorities in their field of expertise, but who will also draw interest from your members and potentially from within the community. This will help drive event registration.
  - Be professional in your approach by using consistent invitation letters.
  - Send confirmation letters to speakers once they've agreed to participate. Your confirmation letter should include logistical details regarding the event location and time and should specify details regarding the speaker's presentation.
  - Hold a prep call to ensure that speakers are introduced to each other in advance.
- **Ideal scheduling for member attendance:** Know your membership and the general types of professional commitments required of them. Know which days of the week/month are best for drawing large crowds and know which days/dates to avoid because they would pose a conflict.

For example:

- In general, events scheduled in the middle of the day, midweek will draw a good-sized crowd for BIG Topic/Luncheon-style events.
- Social or Mixer-type events with very little programming are best scheduled around "happy hour" times toward the end of the day.

- In all cases, schedule the event at least 4 weeks in advance of the intended event date to allow sufficient time to market the event widely and to drive a significant number of registrants from inside and outside the existing Chapter membership.
- **All logistics and planning executed flawlessly:** Exceptionally executed programming logistics are critical to ensuring event success. These elements are often the most time-consuming and communication-intensive components of the event. Communication is the key element in ensuring all of these items are executed properly.

Establish internal protocols for every event regarding the following:

- Venue/Vendors – Contracts requiring review and signature for approval are sent to the National Headquarters well in advance of any event. By so doing, staff will schedule critical deadlines in the event plan, ensure venues and vendors are paid on time, staff will review Banquet Event Orders for accuracy, etc.
  - Signage – Plans for signage should be made well in advance to allow for any graphic design and printing required for the signage.
  - Volunteers – Ensure that a sufficient number of volunteers have been recruited to support registration, onsite programming logistics, venue coordination onsite, membership recruitment at the event, etc. All of these volunteers will also need an overview of their specific assignments at the event to ensure they arrive on time and are appropriately engaged in the task requested of them.
- 
- **Great marketing:** Marketing is critical. You can organize an amazing event but if no one knows about it, no one will attend. Electronic marketing flyers are an important vehicle for communicating event details and a call to action to register. All flyers must be submitted through the Toolbox, and designed and/or approved through National.
    - Keep flyers simple and uncluttered. Include only relevant event information to prompt the prospective attendee to go to the online registration site for additional information or to call for more information. Flyers can also include photos or images that are relevant to the association or to the specific event.
    - Ensure that event-specific sponsor logos are properly displayed and denoted as event sponsors. As a VAREP brand standard, sponsor logos should be smaller than the VAREP logo when positioned on the same flyer.
    - Ensure that, if annual sponsor logos are on the flyer, they are denoted as such and comply with the brand standards in terms of sizing.
    - Staff will schedule internal electronic marketing via the Chapter's member and contact database.
    - Chapter Board directors should ADDITIONALLY market the event to their personal contact groups and in a more formal, structured manner via office visits to title offices, real estate offices, etc.
  - **Have food whenever possible:** Exciting events usually have some type of food included. When building your budget, consider adding an appropriate food & beverage element to generate a

larger attendee turnout. Including food in the event enables a more social atmosphere and helps facilitate interaction between attendees. Some things to consider:

- In general – The purpose of providing the food is not to spend enough to feed the entire attendee group a 5-course meal, it's to draw attendees, ensure early or on-time arrival, and allow attendees to engage with one another. Therefore, always order a sufficient amount to cover only the registered attendees, NOT additional on-site registrants. This will also help prevent budgetary waste from ordering too much food.
- Social/Mixer Events – Since this type of event is often hosted at a bar or restaurant, you can often plan to provide a variety of appetizers and a “cash” or “no-host” bar while still maintaining a relatively conservative budget.
- BIG Topic Events – These might be thought of as luncheon-type events, since your goal should be to have 200+ attendees. You will want to order a buffet-style or plated lunch; heavy appetizers can also suffice. Attendees are expected to come to an event and stay long enough to hear a keynote speaker and potentially a panel of experts on some relevant topic, so they'll expect to be fed and should expect to pay a registration fee, even if they're members, in order to meet these expectations.
- Educational Events – These events may include between 50 and 100 attendees but can be larger, depending on the topic. The event differs from a "BIG Topic Event" because of its potential to draw a somewhat smaller attendee group. Often the topic may be a specific type of training, perhaps offering CE credit, which is itself a registration draw.
- Have a goal for minimum number of “New to VAREP” attendees: This is an important goal to set so that you are constantly marketing the benefits of membership to new audiences and increasing membership among those “New to VAREP” populations. These individuals will be a great resource for membership additions to the Chapter.

### **Local Chapter Income and Fundraising**

VAREP is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a great cause. The purpose of income is to raise money to allow us to be able to host more military and veteran financial-literacy events and housing workshops and, in some cases, to operate a brick-and-mortar military and veteran housing and employment resource center. We do not need to tag on to another organization like “Wounded Warrior Project®,” etc.

### **Don't be Shy...Ask for it!**

This is often the most challenging part of any fundraising campaign, but you must ask for the money your organization needs. Ask your Board, your community, your municipal government, foundations, and local businesses for annual contributions to continue your good work. The "Ask" can come in a variety of forms and might include anything from an email, newsletter, or mailing to a personal visit to request support.

### **Annual Income Requirements**

Depending on the Chapter budget and annual event plan, VAREP National projects that the average Chapter needs to raise approximately \$30,000–\$40,000 annually to host and manage the core events.

## **Chapter Sponsors & Strategic Partnerships**

Annual and event sponsorships are an important source of funding for Chapters and are considered “restricted funds” because they are given in exchange for specific entitlements and benefits to the sponsor. VAREP Chapters may entertain only annual or event-sponsorship relationships with organizations whose products, purpose, or corporate philosophy are not in conflict with the VAREP mission. VAREP does not engage in partnership or sponsorship relationships with organizations whose corporate purpose relates to alcohol, tobacco, or firearms promotion or sales.

## **Grants for Nonprofit Organizations**

Grants are not a loan or “free money.” Grants are amounts of money given to organizations or individuals for specific purposes. You can obtain grants from businesses, foundations, and the government. You can obtain large sums of money for your projects or research if you tap the right resources. Think about your project's goals and mission, and then research groups that share similar interests. Grants come large and small. It's easy to think that a giant organization such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supports only large projects, but it has provided grants as small as \$50.

## **Ten Charity Fundraising-Event Ideas**

When your charitable cause needs large amounts of money, charity fundraising events can be your best option. The huge funds generated by these events can be used for a single project or the ongoing operations of your charitable organization. The following are 10 charity fundraising events that, if implemented correctly, are sure to raise large amounts of money for your Local Chapter:

- Charity walk. Big-name charities like the American Cancer Society use charity walks as one of their primary charity-fundraising events. Have walkers gather pledges per mile from their friends and family. Invite the community out to support participants as they walk for a cause!
- Charity Golf Tourney. Instead of gathering donations, golfers pay an entry fee to compete in this charity golf tourney. Contact local businesses to sponsor t-shirts for entrants, golf holes, and donation of items for the goody bags golfers receive on the day of the tourney.
- Charity Concert. Let music bring people together for your cause. Contact local newspapers and radio stations to publicize your event. Pre-sell discounted tickets and offer full-price tickets at the door.
- Automobile raffle. Who wouldn't want to win a car? Contact your local automobile dealer and ask them to donate either the vehicle or a portion of the vehicle's cost. As this is a big-ticket raffle, publicize it in newspapers and on the radio and the Internet to maximize raffle ticket sales.
- Charity dinner. Couple a tasty, home-cooked meal with a good cause and your community will flock to this charity fundraising event. If you're a 501(c)(3) organization, many grocery stores will donate gift cards you can use to purchase supplies for your charity dinner.
- Charity auction. Gather donations from local businesses and supporters of your cause for a silent-auction fundraiser. Combine both big-ticket and lower-priced items to attract the most bidders possible. Make it a live auction with an enthusiastic auctioneer spurring bidders on for more fun and funds!
- Charity garage sale. Gather donation items from your organization's members and other community members and hold your sale in a high-traffic area. Advertise your sale well in

advance, noting the organization it supports. Donate any items left over after the garage sale to charitable thrift shops.

- Charity tours of homes. Ask homeowners, particularly in your town's historic district, to open their homes for a good cause. Sell tickets for private viewings of fine architecture in your community.
- Penny carnival. Despite the name "penny carnival," your organization can raise thousands of dollars with this family-friendly charity fundraising event. Sell tickets to take part in activities at the different booths. Add raffle items or a 50-50 raffle to raise even more money.
- Online fundraising. Leverage your social networks and raise money online. Though one might not think that you can raise a lot from your Facebook friends, Twitter and Instagram followers or email contacts, you'd be surprised.

### **XIII. SUMMARY**

Whew! You have read or most likely skimmed the handbook. Remember, the handbook is your reference for effectively managing a VAREP Local Chapter.

I will promise you a lot of hard work, but I assure you that the satisfaction of helping veterans realize the dream of homeownership is well worth the effort.

When it is time for you to transition into another role on the Board or take a break from serving on a VAREP Board, ask yourself the following questions:

- What kind of Board are you leaving behind?
- Are your Board directors cross-trained?
- How are the Chapter finances?
- How are the relationships with sponsors?
- How is VAREP viewed among real estate and lending professionals?
- How is VAREP viewed within the community?
- Has the Board, under your watch, met the VAREP minimum standards?
- Are there unresolved problems?

“I wish you the best and thank you for serving as a VAREP Board director.” Son Nguyen - Founder and CEO