



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 2, 2017.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County

Program Title: Wills for Vets: A Legal Service for Veterans

Program Category: Health & Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Sarah Henry

Title: Director

Department: Prince William Area Agency on Aging

Complete Mailing Address: 5 County Complex Court, Suite 240, Woodbridge, VA 22192

Telephone: 703-792-6439 Website: www.pwccgov.org/aging

Email: shenry@pwccgov.org

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christopher E. Martino

Title: County Executive

Signature:

State Problem:

The Prince William Area Agency on Aging provides many services to veterans in the Prince William Area. While working with the veterans it was noticed that many veterans do not seek legal advice due to ineligibility after service and go without basic legal documents such as Wills, Power of Attorney or Advanced Medical Directives. As the need for home and community based services increase and decisions are made regarding long-term services and supports, being able to address basic legal needs is critical more than ever. Making decisions such as who to designate as a Power of Attorney and/or who will answer questions regarding healthcare on behalf of the veteran is paramount. Preparing an Advanced Directive and making their wishes known empowers the veteran to speak for themselves now, in the event they are unable to later on. This self-direction in anticipating and determining their long-term needs, serves to connect veterans to appropriate and timely legal services and resources in their community.

As veterans age, the desire to age in place by being able to locate resources and services in their local communities are paramount. The ability for a veteran to access free legal services right in their own community is not an option that is readily available.

How did the program fulfill the awards criteria:

The idea for the Wills for Veterans (WFV) came while attending a conference workshop supporting veteran programs and services in June 2014. The point was made that there is a need for legal services for military service members, once they are separated from the military. In order to execute the program, the need to partner with experts on the subjects of Wills, Power of Attorneys and Advanced Medical Directives, and keep cost low and affordable, the idea to work with the Prince William County Bar Association/Pro bono Subcommittee was born.

The collaboration between the Prince William Area Agency on Aging and the Prince William County Bar Association/Pro bono Subcommittee was the key to making this program a success. Another key factor to the program was to conduct this program at a VFW. This was important as it serves as a trusted focal point in the community for veterans. Without the collaboration between the Prince William Area Agency on Aging, the Prince William County Bar Association/Pro bono Subcommittee and the local VFW, this program would not have been possible to serve the veterans.

How was the program carried out:

The program was conducted in three series of meetings. Each of the meetings served a specific purpose in the process and they were held as follows: First, educational sessions were scheduled in 2 week intervals at the VFW. After the educational sessions each veteran completed a questionnaire before meeting with the attorneys. Second, appointments were scheduled for each of the veterans, and the appointments were mandatory to attend so the attorneys could speak directly to the veteran about their legal documents that they wanted to have prepared. The third meeting was to sign the documents. At this step in the process, we asked for volunteers from Prince William Area Agency on Aging staff and others in the community to serve as a witness for the execution of the documents.

The coordination to plan the event started months before the first meeting was held. Prince William Area Agency on Aging staff and the Prince William County Bar Association held meetings to determine how the program would be implemented. Presentations were made in the community at three different Veteran organizations to bring awareness of the new program and to generate support of the program. After the program was promoted, the registration process began. Over 70 people registered to participate in the program and at the final signing, 60 Veterans and Spouses of Veterans received their legal documents.

Financial Information/Staffing

One Prince William Area Agency on Aging employees coordinated this program. The Prince William County Bar Association provided 14 attorneys for the pro bono services. Other volunteers were utilized to serve as witnesses and notaries. The Prince William Area Agency on Aging provided the staff time for administrative support of the program This resulted in no additional cost re: salary, travel, equipment, supplies or materials. The Prince William Bar Association provided all billable-hours, travel, equipment, supplies, materials and administrative support were donated.

Program Results

The goal was to provide affordable legal documents to veterans who were no longer eligible for legal services through the military. A total of 60 veterans spouses/caregivers were served. Once the sessions were concluded, surveys were mailed out to all attendees and data was collected. 36 of the 60 veterans served responded. The results were as follows: 100% stated they were very satisfied, and stated they would recommend it to others, 92% stated the program was valuable, and 83% stated the program met their needs.

Although this program served veterans 18 years of age and older, based on questionnaires completed, the majority of those served were older veterans. Veterans stated that having these documents completed and in place relieved them from the burden of such a daunting task, simplified the process, and allowed their wishes to be made known. Having completed these legal documents gave the veterans a sense of confidence in knowing that their wishes of, how to address their medical needs, remain in their homes, and in the community for as long as they could, would now be honored.

Program Overview

The WFV program is a partnership between the Prince William Area Agency on Aging and the Prince William Bar Association to provide Wills, Power of Attorneys and Advanced Medical Directives to veterans, spouses of veterans and their caregivers. The program is offered in three series, 1) all participants must attend an information sessions and complete a questionnaire; 2) meet with attorney to review legal documents; and 3) meet with attorney and witness to execute the documents. The program provided legal documents to 60 veterans.

The Prince William Area Agency on Aging staff provided the time and resources to coordinate the program and the Prince William Bar Association provided the legal expertise. The program was provided to veterans at no additional cost to the Prince William Area Agency on Aging, the Prince William Bar Association or to the veteran. Having these important legal documents in place provides the veteran and their family with a sense of security to ensure their wishes are upheld.

3-4 paragraph of program summary

The Wills for Veterans Program (WFV) was developed out of the need for legal services for veterans who have separated from the military and are no longer eligible to access military lawyers or legal services through the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps. In recognition of the difficulty that service members experience when transitioning from active duty to civilian life, the Prince William Area Agency on Aging (Agency)-lead agency, and the Virginia Prince William County Bar Association (PWCBA) partnered to assist veterans of all ages, that live in the tri-jurisdictional area of Prince William County, the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park, by offering WFV program, at no cost, to provide basic legal services to veterans who are no longer eligible for the legal services afforded to them when they were on active duty status.

Many adults put off making a will or other legal decisions out of concern about the cost, apprehension or lack of the information and understanding about the use and purpose of these documents.

Approximately 55% of American adults do not have a will or other estate plans in place. This number has stayed relatively steady since 2000, but among minorities, the numbers are higher than in general population: 68% of African American adult and 74% of Hispanic adults do not have a will.

<http://info.legalzoom.com/statistics-last-wills-testaments-3947.html>

In the tri-jurisdictional area, veterans make up almost 15% of the population of those 18 years of age and over. According to the 2013 Prince William Area Community Needs Assessment, the veteran population for the tri-jurisdictional area totaled more than 43,000, with the greatest concentration ranging in the ages between 35-64 years of age. Many of those veterans have returned to our community with service connected disabilities as a result of battlefield injuries and many will require long-term care. Having basic legal documents in place will protect the veteran and their family.