



Overview of the Benefits Protection Team Leader Toolkit

Strategic Leadership for Grassroots Advocacy

Keeping the Promise

Nearly **1 million members strong**, DAV steps up, organizes, and advocates for the most critical issues facing veterans and their families.

As a Benefits Protection Team Leader, you serve as the strategic link between DAV national and local grassroots action.

Your leadership is the engine that drives advocacy—mobilizing members, educating the public, and influencing legislation.



Core Toolkit Objectives

1. Professionalize grassroots advocacy

The toolkit bridges the gap between a veteran's personal experience and the complex world of federal policy. It provides the scripts, templates and frameworks necessary for leaders to present a professional, unified and nonpartisan front when engaging with congressional offices and Department of Veterans Affairs officials.

2. Synchronize local and national efforts

By outlining a clear annual road map and standardized reporting structures, the toolkit ensures that team leaders in different parts of the country are working toward the same legislative priorities. This allows DAV to speak with one powerful voice in Washington D.C.

3. Streamline the resolution process

The toolkit serves as the user manual for DAV's policy engine. It simplifies the technical process of identifying gaps in veterans services and drafting formal resolutions, ensuring that the best ideas from the chapter level can rise to become national resolutions DAV advocates for.

The bottom line: This toolkit provides leaders with clear, actionable strategies they need to champion veterans policies with confidence and passion.

The 3 Pillars of Leadership

PILLAR	CORE OBJECTIVE	KEY TOOL
Mobilization	Grow DAV CAN	DAV CAN sign-up QR code or link
Communication	Humanize data for congressional staffers	Veteran, Issue, Consequence framework
Legislation	Identify gaps in care, and draft resolutions	Resolutions webinar and workshop

Annual Advocacy Roadmap

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER

Brief chapters on national priorities. Launch local recruitment for DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network). Schedule meetings with congressional staff in Washington, D.C., during the annual mid-winter conference.



JANUARY-MARCH

Prepare to lead the charge to the mid-winter conference in Washington D.C. Confirm meetings with congressional staff.



APRIL-JUNE

Draft and advance resolutions through chapter and department conventions.



JULY-AUGUST

Prepare for and participate in the national convention.

Pillar 1: Mobilization of DAV CAN

Activating the Grassroots Power in Every Community



Operation: Keep the Promise

Commander's Action Network (DAV CAN)

DAV CAN is a rapid-response tool that allows us to speak with a unified, collective voice directly to elected officials.

As a benefits protection team leader (BPTL), your role is to translate a DAV CAN alert into concrete local action. Ensure every chapter officer and as many members and supporters as possible are signed up.



Pillar 2: Strategic Communication

The Veteran, Issue, Consequence Framework

Congressional staffers remember stories, not just statistics. The Veteran, Issue, Consequence framework helps you human data:

- **Veteran:** Establish credibility and local connection.
- **Issue:** Tie the veteran to a specific legislative priority.
- **Consequence:** Show the real-world stakes of inaction (the “hook”).

Veteran, Issue, Consequence Framework in Action

Example: Michael Ross

- **Veteran:** Michael Ross, Army veteran from District XX.
- **Issue:** Current VA travel reimbursement doesn't match local gas prices.
- **Consequence:** Michael lives 60 miles from the clinic; he must choose between fuel for physical therapy (PT) or groceries.

Best Practices

- **Collect:** Spend 5 minutes at each meeting asking for stories related to policy goals.
- **Organize:** Categorize stories by issue in a binder or digital folder.
- **Deploy:** Share a story during town halls or meetings to maximize impact.

Pillar 3: Legislation

The Resolution Life Cycle

Resolutions define DAV policy and unite members in a common direction. You guide the “Ladder of Advocacy” until it becomes a national resolution.

Chapter: Ideas are born; identifying gaps in VA care.

Department: Voted on at state conventions.

National: Adopted at convention; becomes DAV’s legislative mandate.



Advocacy Do's and Don'ts

The DAV Leader Should

Remain Nonpartisan:

Focus on the veteran's issue, not the politician's party affiliation.

Use DAV Materials:

Use our vetted data and stories to prove points and humanize issues.

Follow Up:

Send thank-you emails and relevant links to staffers after meetings.

The DAV Leader Should NOT

Go Off-Script:

Only advocate for issues supported by officially adopted DAV resolutions.

Submit State-Only Issues:

Avoid local issues (e.g. property tax) for national resolutions.

Be Argumentative:

Keep the bridge open for future discussions, even when disagreeing.

Questions & Support

- DAV CAN
- Benefits Protection Team Leader Toolkit
- National Legislative Team

For any questions or help, please contact DAV's Legislative Department at legislativepublic@dav.org or (202) 554-3501.



DAV CAN



Legislative Resources



BPTL Toolkit

Thank you!

Your leadership ensures DAV speaks with one unified, authoritative voice.
Thank you for protecting the integrity of DAV's legislative process.

DAV National Legislative Team