



DAV[®]

**BENEFITS
PROTECTION
TEAM LEADER**

TOOLKIT

KEEPING THE PROMISE TO
AMERICA'S
VETERANS

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 nationwide and local grassroots action. Your service as a team leader is the engine that drives DAV’s member advocacy. When you lead your team, you’re actively defending veterans benefits by mobilizing members, educating the public and influencing legislation.

The purpose of the Benefit Protection Team Leader Toolkit is to provide a standardized, high-impact plan for grassroots advocacy. It’s designed to transform DAV member volunteers into strategic leaders who can effectively influence legislation, mobilize public support and ensure the promises made to America’s veterans are kept.

SPECIFICALLY, THE TOOLKIT SERVES THREE CORE 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 the clear, actionable strategies they need to champion veterans policies with confidence and passion.

The Benefits Protection Team leader year at a glance

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 at 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.

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

MOBILIZATION: DAV CAN

While the legislative team at DAV Washington Headquarters tirelessly advocates on Capitol Hill, the true power of DAV resides in our grassroots network—the dedicated members in every community.

DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) is the tool to activate that power. DAV CAN is a rapid response tool that allows us to speak with a unified, collective voice directly to elected officials. When you mobilize your chapter through DAV CAN, you ensure that the needs of disabled veterans aren't just heard; they're acted upon.

Our advocacy focuses on critical, life-changing policy goals. Your members' actions through DAV CAN directly influence the success of these legislative battles. This isn't just about showing support but about making a tangible difference.

On average, more than a half-million messages are sent from DAV supporters to Congress each year. As

a chapter leader, your role is to translate a DAV CAN alert into concrete local action. Here's how:

- **Sign up:** Ensure every officer and as many members as possible are signed up for DAV CAN alerts at davcan.org.
- **Request materials:** Obtain business cards or legislative materials at dav.org under Member Resources > Legislation.

A successful team leader is a well-informed leader. And legislative advocacy shouldn't be a once-a-year event—it should be a standing item in your chapter's agenda. By incorporating advocacy into your chapter meetings, you transform your members from passive recipients of information into active, powerful advocates, ensuring that DAV remains the strongest voice for our nation's disabled veterans.

Benefits Protection Team Leader goal: 100% enrollment of chapter officers in DAV CAN.



COMMUNICATION

The Veteran, Issue, Consequence framework is a simplified storytelling tool designed to help you humanize legislative data.

While statistics (e.g., 50,000 veterans are affected) are important, members of Congress and their

staffers are more likely to remember a specific story about a constituent. The framework ensures your team captures these stories in a way that's professional, emotional and directly tied to a legislative goal.

THE FRAMEWORK BREAKDOWN

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	GOAL
Veteran	Who is the person (name, branch, service-connected status)?	Establishes credibility and local connection
Issue	What specific problem or gap in benefits are they facing?	Ties the person to a specific DAV legislative priority
Consequence	What happens to their life or family if this issue isn't fixed?	Shows the real-world stakes of inaction (the "hook")

EXAMPLE OF A FRAMEWORK ENTRY

- **Veteran:** Michael Ross, Army veteran from District XX
- **Issue:** The current VA travel reimbursement rate hasn't been updated to match local gas prices.
- **Consequence:** Michael lives 60 miles from the nearest VA clinic. He's now forced to choose between paying for gas to get to his physical therapy or buying groceries for the week.

DRAFTING A STORY USING THE FRAMEWORK COLLECTION SHEET

You can print this and keep it in your folder during chapter meetings.

DAV ADVOCACY STORY CAPTURE

Name: _____

Contact Info: _____

Legislative Priority: (e.g., toxic exposure, caregiver support, health care) _____

The Story:

- **Veteran:** _____
- **Issue:** _____
- **Consequence:** _____

Permission: Ask for permission to share this story with Congress or with DAV's communications team (feedback@dav.org).

HOW TO USE THE FRAMEWORK SHEET AS A BENEFITS PROTECTION TEAM LEADER

- 1. Collect:** Spend five minutes during your chapter meeting and ask, "Does anyone have a story related to any of our current critical policy goals?" If your chapter doesn't have any local stories, you can also collect and use the ones we publish in [DAV Magazine](#) and on dav.org.
- 2. Organize:** Keep a binder or digital folder of these stories categorized by issue. For additional print copies of DAV Magazine, contact our

- communications team at feedback@dav.org.
- 3. Deploy:** When you meet a staffer at the mid-winter conference or a local town hall, don't just hand them our print materials—share a story using the Veteran, Issue, Consequence framework to maximize the impact of your advocacy.

Benefits Protection Team leader goal: Identify at least one story for any upcoming meeting.

LEGISLATION

While the other pillars focus on people and stories, this pillar focuses on policy. As a team leader, you're the architect who ensures that local issues are transformed into national resolutions.

Our annual resolution process is the backbone of DAV's advocacy. Resolutions define policy, officially set DAV positions and unite members in a common direction.

THE RESOLUTION LIFE CYCLE

A resolution is more than just a document—it's DAV's official voice. Your role is to guide an idea through the "ladder of advocacy" until it becomes a national resolution.

- **Chapter level:** Ideas are born here. You help members identify gaps in VA care or benefits and draft the initial resolution.
- **Department level:** Resolutions are debated and voted on at state department conventions.
- **National level:** Approved department resolutions are sent to the national convention. Those adopted there become the issues DAV lobbies for in Washington, D.C.

ANATOMY OF A POWERFUL RESOLUTION

To make an impact, a resolution must be built correctly. Use the Title-Whereas-Resolved model:

- **Title:** A concise statement of intent (e.g., Expand Caregiver Support for All Eras).

- **Whereas (the facts):** These are your justifications. They should be factual and brief and provide the evidence for why a change is needed.
 - Use two to three strong whereas clauses rather than a long list of grievances.
- **Resolved (the action):** This is the ask. It tells the government exactly what to do (e.g., "Resolved that DAV support legislation to ...").

This grassroots approach ensures that DAV's legislative priorities are informed directly by the real-world experiences and needs of veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors.

While resolutions are adopted annually, many of DAV's legislative priorities are long-standing, allowing for sustained advocacy on complex issues that often take years to address. Online training is available through [legislative webinars](#) at [dav.org](#) under About DAV > Legislation.

If you have questions or would like feedback on a resolution you or someone from your chapter drafted, contact our national legislative staff at legislativepublic@dav.org.

CRITICAL POLICY GOALS

Stay aligned with the national legislative program. Advocacy should focus on DAV's [Critical Policy Goals](#), which are updated annually and available at [dav.org](#) under About DAV > Legislation.

LEGISLATIVE DO'S AND DON'TS FOR BENEFITS PROTECTION TEAM LEADERS

Do	Don't
Remain nonpartisan. Focus on the veteran's issue, not the politician's party.	Go off-script. Only advocate for issues supported by adopted DAV resolutions.
Use DAV materials. Use our data and stories to prove your points and humanize the issue during meetings.	Submit state-only issues. Avoid submitting local issues (e.g., property tax) for national resolutions.
Follow up. Always send a thank-you email to staffers and share relevant stories or links.	Be argumentative. Even if a legislator disagrees, keep the bridge open for future discussions.

BENEFITS PROTECTION TEAM LEADER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Use this checklist to identify strengths and areas where the toolkit can provide support. Create a personal development plan for your term as a leader.

Rate your confidence in each area on a scale of 1 (Need Training) to 5 (Expert/Can Train Others).

PILLAR 1: MOBILIZATION

- I'm registered for DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network).
- I know the names and contact info for the legislative assistants in my local congressional offices.
- I can organize an email, letter-writing or call-in campaign in response to a DAV CAN action alert.
- I'm currently mentoring someone in legislative advocacy.

PILLAR 2: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

- I have a 30-second DAV "elevator pitch" memorized for meetings with staffers.
- I can identify at least one veteran in my area whose story fits the **Veteran, Issue, Consequence** framework.
- I feel comfortable speaking in front of a chapter or department to provide a legislative update.
- I know how to keep a meeting with a legislator nonpartisan.

PILLAR 3: LEGISLATIVE FLUENCY

- I can name at least three DAV Critical Policy Goals for the current session.
- I understand the difference between a resolution and a bill.
- I know how to navigate *The Independent Budget* to find specific data points.
- I can explain the resolution cycle from a local chapter to the national convention.

INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

Score	Leadership Profile	Focus Area
12-25	Recruit	Focus on the legislation section of the toolkit. Learn the priorities thoroughly.
26-45	Advocate	Focus on communication . Practice your pitch, and gather stories using the Veteran, Issue, Consequence framework.
46-60	Strategist	Focus on mobilization . Train others, and expand DAV CAN.





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