



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs  
Illinois Department of Military Affairs

# Illinois Joining Forces Fiscal Year 2014 Summary



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**MISSION:** The Illinois Joining Forces mission is to establish, maintain and nurture a state-wide public and private organizational network that will identify, collaborate, and marshal available resources and services in order to create efficient access and delivery of these programs to the State's military and veteran communities.

**VISION:** IJF's guiding principles since inception are: to activate and increase the collaboration and communication amongst stakeholders that will close the gap of available resources to service members, veterans and their families; develop solution-based working groups to overcome obstacles in the delivery of quality services; and provide common-sense and real-time solutions to policy makers that improve programs and target inefficiencies and redundancies in the delivery of services and programs.

## From the Leadership at IJF



Friends,

We are pleased to present the fiscal year 2014 Annual Summary of Illinois Joining Forces (IJF), a public-private collaborative organization designed to assist service members, veterans and their families (SMVF) in navigating the “sea of goodwill” so they can empower themselves to thrive.

We have made a substantial amount of progress and have experienced some exceptional growth in our membership as well as had measurable and positive impact in the Illinois military and veteran community. This summary describes some of our activities and growth as well as highlights our priorities for the exciting year ahead. IJF has become a force-multiplier for veteran-serving organizations and is anticipated to transition into becoming a stand-alone non-profit entity in the near future. Finally, you will gain insight as to where you can assist if you decide to become a member or a supporter of IJF.

Thank you for continuing to be a part of the Illinois state-wide effort to support and serve Illinois’ service members, veterans, and their families.

Semper Fidelis,

Rodrigo Garcia

**Board Chairman**

**Illinois Joining Forces**

&

**Acting Director**

**Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs**



Illinois Department of  
**Veterans’ Affairs**



## Executive Summary

We are pleased to present the fiscal year 2014 Annual Summary of Illinois Joining Forces (IJF), a public-private collaborative organization designed to assist service members, veterans and their families (SMVF) in navigating the “sea of goodwill” so they can empower themselves to thrive.

Illinois boasts a large military and veteran population and is home to numerous Department of Defense military facilities, including Naval Station Great Lakes, Scott Air Force Base, and the Rock Island Depot. There are also a multitude of Illinois National Guard posts peppered throughout the state which employ many active and reserve Army and Air Guard personnel.

As always, the State of Illinois works diligently to assist, empower, and honor our state’s military heroes, their families, and their survivors. Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA) empowers our veterans and their families to thrive by assisting them in obtaining the benefits to which they are entitled. However, there are limitations to the traditional or standard benefits - sometimes they aren’t enough of a resource to solve the veteran’s problem or address the issue.

That is where IJF, the community of Illinois organizations dedicated to serving our Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families (SMVF) population, become very valuable partners in delivering the full spectrum of assistance to those who serve as well as for their families. IJF has made successful strides in creating a “no-wrong door” responsive system of support, where organizations link together to share information, host events, and provide military cultural competence training to community members and service providers, thereby “bridging the gaps.” With over 57 new members joining IJF during this period, member organizations hosting dozens of collaborative events, and trainings conducted for over 900 participants, IJF was awarded the Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence award was given to IDVA for creation of IJF, at the White House, by the USDVA & NASDVA for this collaborative model and positive state-wide impact.

This year’s summary includes a description of the background of IJF, outlines the progress and impact of IJF in Illinois during Fiscal Year 2014, and sets forth IJF’s priorities for Fiscal Year 2015.



# 2014 IJF Annual Summary



This summary covers the Fiscal Year of 2014 spanning in time from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.



## What We Do

We are pleased to present the fiscal year 2014 Annual Summary of Illinois Joining Forces (IJF), a public-private collaborative organization designed to assist service members, veterans and their families (SMVF) in navigating the “sea of goodwill” so they can empower themselves to thrive.

- (1) convening military and veteran support organizations, through Illinois Joining Forces working groups, to build cross-sector relationships and mutual awareness;
- (2) providing policy recommendations through Illinois Joining Forces member working groups to the Illinois Discharged Servicemember Task Force and the Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council;
- (3) facilitating the transfer of information and knowledge among Illinois Joining Forces member organizations;
- (4) maintaining and continuing to build the no-wrong-door online navigation platform;
- (5) coordinate and conduct “military/veteran 101” training, crafted for the purpose of educating Illinois Joining Forces members and other community providers regarding military and veteran culture and needs, thus improving the collective capacity of the support system; and
- (6) outreach directly to service members, veterans, and their families regarding the no-wrong-door system that Illinois Joining Forces provides to them.

## Background

IJF, a collaborative established in 2012 by an inter-governmental agency agreement between the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) and the Illinois Department of Military Affairs (IDMA), is a statewide, public-private network of veteran- and military-serving organizations working together under the leadership of Governor Pat Quinn to improve services to Illinois' military and veteran communities. IJF's initial mission was to map Illinois' “sea of goodwill” and chart the plethora of resources and services available and committed to servicing Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF). IJF's goal was to increase awareness and connectivity among its member organizations so that they and those we serve, can better navigate the system of support.

Each IJF member organization signs a Memorandum of Understanding with IDVA and IDMA, agreeing to collaborate in-person via up-to three (3) of nine (9) Working Groups and assist our target service population. Working Groups meet at least quarterly, and many have monthly calls and events. Through this collaboration,



the experts in each Working Group can create efficiencies, synergy and resourcing for new programming, identify service gaps, and work together to create not only a more approachable network of support, but an enhanced and informed collection of service providers that can expand their impact.

In addition to the in-person collaboration, IJF has a website that creates a mechanism and forum for organizations to collaborate online. The IJF website is a platform that brings government agencies, veteran service organizations, and service providers from across Illinois together in an unparalleled attempt to better communicate and coordinate services. It also provides service members, veterans, and their families, direct access to the organizations that might have the resources they need to successfully navigate civilian life. The website content is member-driven, with IJF member organizations regularly updating their event postings, program details, service descriptions, hours of operation, and locations.

During this period, IJF was led by the Executive Committee (EC). The EC leadership included leaders from IDVA and IDMA, and the Chairs of the nine (9) Working Groups. IJF's operations included holding a monthly EC meeting via teleconference, and each quarter, hosting one of the EC meetings in-person in the Chicago and Springfield offices of IDVA. In addition to the EC meetings, IJF was staffed and supported administratively by an IDVA Senior Program Manager, 2 Americorps/Veteran Leader Corps members paid for by IDVA - one located in Chicago and one in Springfield, and 2 IDMA National Guard Officers.

## Answering the Call

In addition to the 129 organizations that were already members, IJF welcomed 57 new member organizations during this period for a total of 186 organizations from across the state of Illinois. IJF reconfigured its nine (9) Working Groups to merge the Families & Children Working Group with the Survivors Working Group. By member request, IJF stood up a new Women Veterans Working Group. The Chair of each Working Group serves on the Executive Committee. The Working Groups reconfigured, are as follows:

### Behavioral Health



- **Behavioral Health** - Led by Tom Miller, of the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health, the Behavioral Health Working Group (BHWG) is a broad network of IJF member organizations working to fulfill a vision where Service Members, Veterans and their Families will be empowered through an alliance of partnerships, resources, increased access, and choice to enjoy satisfying and fulfilling lives in their communities.

The BHWG has identified priorities, and established subcommittees to focus on the following areas: Closing Services Gap and Suicide Prevention, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Training, and Needs Assessment.



## Benefits & Emergency Assistance



- **Benefits & Emergency Assistance** - Led by Steve Fixler, Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission of DuPage County (who also serves as the IJF Representative from the Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions), the shared mission of this Working Group is to ensure that veteran advocates understand civilian assistance programs and that civilian case managers and organizations understand veteran benefits.

This working group brings together leaders from public agencies and non-profit organizations to assist each other and service members, veterans and their families in understanding the full spectrum of - and intersection of - civilian and military/veteran benefit programs. Types of programs this group will address include disability benefits, healthcare, nutrition, emergency assistance and others that Working Group members identify in the future; however, the work of this group will specifically exclude housing, employment and education programs.

## Education



- **Education** - Led by Amy Sherman of the Council for Adult & Experiential Education, the diverse Education Working Group (EWG) includes educational institutions, state agencies, and non-profit organizations working to improve access to education benefits and facilitate a successful educational experience for service members, veterans and their families.

The current projects of the Education Working Group include: conducting statewide "train the trainer" sessions on **Military/Veteran 101** training for college and university faculty; working with university and college officials to assist them in recognizing military learning for appropriate, full academic credit; conducting advisor training covering topics from career pathways to financial benefits; hosting a webinar series on topical issues concerning student veterans.

Most recently, the EWG co-hosted several events throughout the state targeting student veterans and employers to increase awareness of potential career paths for veterans and connect the student veterans with networking mentors.

**"During the past year, the IJF Education Working Group engaged in statewide faculty training developed by CAEL in close collaboration with National Louis University, Lewis University, and others. The training focused on providing information about student veterans in and out of the classroom, offering practical tips on ways to best serve and support them in achieving their education and career goals. This training was delivered by CAEL in five train-the-trainer sessions with nearly 50 institutions of higher learning in Illinois."**

*- Paul Knudtson, Director of Armed Services Relations, National Louis University*





## Employment & Job Training



**"This year, the IJF Employment Working Group developed a training in collaboration with National Able Network to help companies find, hire, and retain more veterans. This program directly led to over 30 new job openings being shared with veterans. In just two months, this new collaboration has led to over a dozen new veterans hired."**

*- Bridget Altenburg, Chief Operating Officer, National Able Network, Education & Job Training WG Chair*



• **Employment & Job Training** - Led by Bridget Altenburg, Chief Operations Officer of Veterans Forward, National Able Network, this working group is committed to connecting veterans to employers, and employers to veterans. The member organizations in the working group are leveraging each other, as well as their respective networks, across all sectors in Illinois.

The ultimate goal is to create a state that systematically prepares veterans to enter the workforce and access quality jobs that allow them to leverage their skills, training, and experiences. Members of the Employment and Job Training working group are aligned to one of three Committees: 1) Employer Engagement; 2) Career Development; and 3) Veteran Engagement.

This working group is currently focused through their Employer Engagement Committee, on developing and executing programming for employers with the goal towards educating them to recognize veterans and their family members as the strategic assets that they are.

## Families Children & Survivors



**"The IJF Families, Children and Survivors Working Group concentrates on two community institutions that impact many military families - public libraries and schools. The IJF Library Toolkit provides libraries a recommended reading list, display suggestions, and ways of engaging military families who have experienced deployment, military stress, or loss. Additionally, we have worked to build awareness in public schools... to ease and mitigate military stress experienced by children of service members."**

*- Kelcey Liverpool, Co-Founder and CEO of Kids Rank, Families, Children & Survivors WG Chair*



• **Families, Children & Survivors** - Led by Kelcey Liverpool, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Kids Rank, this working group is committed to collaboratively supporting families and children of our uniformed service members through raising awareness of and providing access to services that meet the unique needs of military families.

Through programming at local schools and libraries as well as through hosting resource fairs, this working group reaches and provides activities programming for many active duty military children in their Illinois communities as well as for veterans, their families and survivors.



## Financial Literacy



- **Financial Literacy** - Led by Akeela White, Assistant Attorney General of Illinois's Military and Veterans' Rights Bureau office, and succeeded by LaKrisha Lindo of Army OneSource, this working group is committed to ensuring that all service members, veterans and their families are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to manage their money, access loans and address other critical financial issues relevant to this community.

Current and future endeavors of the Financial Literacy Working Group include: establishing connectivity with the Emergency Assistance Working Group so that any service member, veteran, and their families who receive emergency financial assistance also have access to financial literacy assistance; developing training programs for student veterans on campus; creating financial literacy materials that can be distributed with VA disability award notices; and building a referral network of financial counselors willing to donate time to work with veterans.

## Homelessness and Housing



- **Homelessness & Housing** - Led by Katie Tuten, a Program Development and Project Manager of Catholic Charities, this working group brings together agencies and organizations who are working to ensure that every service member, veteran, and their families have access to shelters in emergencies and affordable housing in the long-term.

Current and future projects of the Homelessness & Housing Working Group include: generating a resource listing of all the regional Continuums of Care, and connecting veteran housing providers with these communities; developing a unified screening process for veteran homeless providers; fostering a better understanding of how Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) grants are awarded and educating the Landlord Association on how to leverage the HUD-VASH program; and engaging with local housing authorities to encourage channeling of development funds toward affordable housing for veterans.



## Legal Support



- **Legal Support** - Led by Jason Vail, Senior Attorney/Chief Counsel, Legal Services, of the American Bar Association, this working group is committed to ensuring that veterans and service members have the support they need in civil legal matters and the criminal justice system. Currently, the Legal Support Working Group is developing Military/Veteran 101 Training Sessions for the Civil/Criminal Justice Community.

Through these trainings, the statewide legal community will be better prepared to offer informed services for veterans and service members in need of assistance. In addition, the members of this group are working to establish a statewide network of attorneys to provide consultation for every veteran who has a legal question or need. The Working Group intends to network together attorneys and legal organizations with expertise in representing military-connected clients to stand ready for referrals. Finally, the Legal Support Working Group aims to expand Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) in strategically identified jurisdictions across the state.

The goal is to keep veterans with mental health challenges out of the traditional justice system, and instead give them treatment and tools for coping with their challenges.

## Women Veterans



- **Women Veterans** - This newly formed working group led by Nicole Mandeville, Associate Director Entrepreneurial Program, Women's Veteran Initiative, of the Women's Business Development Center, is committed to ensuring that the unique needs of women service members and veterans - including access to resources, treatment for military sexual trauma, and childcare - are met.

In general, this group seeks to equip both veteran and community providers to better understand and serve women who have served, as well as to develop and implement targeted methods of outreach to women veterans to ensure they are connected with the resources and benefits that they have earned.



## Together, the IJS Executive Committee directed and the Working Groups continued to provide support and create programming that:

- Introduced legislation to the Illinois General Assembly for the creation of a public-charity to off-board IJS from being a state-held and managed organization to stand up an independent public foundation through which IJS could continue to grow and provide positive impact to Illinois' SMVF through its own structure and leadership;
- Maintained and continued to build the no-wrong-door, web-based, navigation platform to effect referrals for veterans, service-members or their families in need of services and to facilitate the transfer and sharing of information and knowledge among Illinois Joining Forces member organizations;
- Facilitated the transfer of information among Illinois Joining Forces member organizations;
- Educated and trained over 1,000 Illinois Joining Forces members and other community providers regarding basic military and veteran culture, vernacular, and typical issues they face as a military servant, thus improving the collective empathy and capacity of the support system;
- Provided outreach directly to service members, veterans, and their families regarding the "no-wrong-door" system that Illinois Joining Forces provides; and
- Provided policy recommendations through Illinois Joining Forces member working groups to the Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council (IVAC) and the Illinois Discharged Servicemember Task Force (DSTF).

## Performance Measures and Impact - For IJS Organizations

There are a couple of things that are a testament to the impact that IJS has made in Illinois since its inception. In February 2014, IJS gained national recognition for its leading model of bringing organizations together to create positive community change and



impact. The IDVA received the Abraham Lincoln Pillars of Excellence Award for the creation of IJS at a special White House Ceremony from the USDVA and NASDVA for this nation-leading model of support for service members, veterans, and their families..

Former Director Borggren accepted this award at a White House ceremony on behalf of IJS and its Executive Committee.

**"I was honored to participate in the Military Immersion Training and am grateful to IJS for putting this together. For those of us who are not veterans but interact and work with veterans, it was important to get a small taste of 'a day in the life in the military'... I left the training with enhanced understanding and sensitivity, and even more respect for our returning veterans who we all owe a great deal to."**

*- Georgia Marsh, Chief Development Officer, Women's Business Development Center*



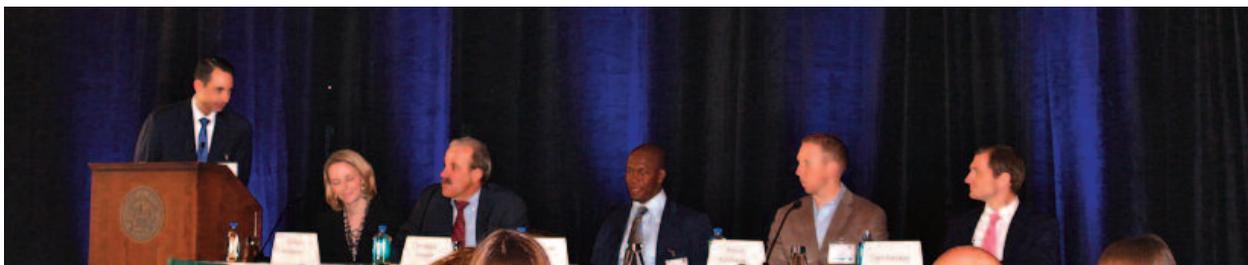


In addition, with the support of IJJF Working Groups and member organizations, during the Spring Session of the Illinois General Assembly, Senate Bill 3222 was introduced, the Illinois Joining Forces Foundation Act. This was the codification of the intent of IJJF and a major step towards establishing the long-term sustainability mechanism through which IJJF will grow to continue convening all of its member organizations. SB-3222 was accepted by the House and the Senate with anticipation of being signed into law during the FY2015 period.

The annual IJJF Summit held in December 2013, brought over 250 attendees together from IJJF member organizations and our community partners for a day of strategic planning and a subsequent day of training.

During this period, the IJJF Working Groups were actively engaged in the Discharged Servicemember Task Force meetings and made 18 policy recommendations addressing various areas of impact for SMVF. In addition, the IJJF Working Groups held 53 collaborative meetings and hosted 14 military cultural competence-related training events - educating over 944 Illinois citizens and service providers. Some specific Working Group achievements are listed as follows:

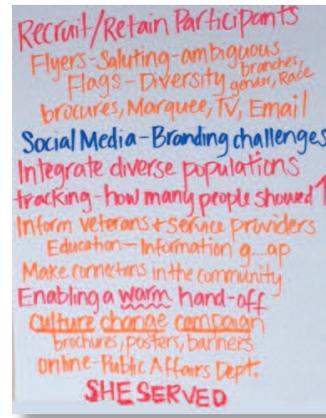
- Behavioral Health—hosted multiple trainings to enhance civilians' military cultural competence about the topics of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Military Sexual Trauma providing continuing education credits to mental-health professionals;
- Benefits & Emergency Assistance - conducted monthly cross-training between civilian and veteran benefits and service providers;
- Education - gathered over 100 faculty from various Illinois community colleges and universities and trained them on military cultural competency and cultural sensitivities;
- Employment & Job Training - hosted a series of events in connection with Veterans as Strategic Assets, networking sessions for employers, hosting hundreds of student veterans at events across Illinois;



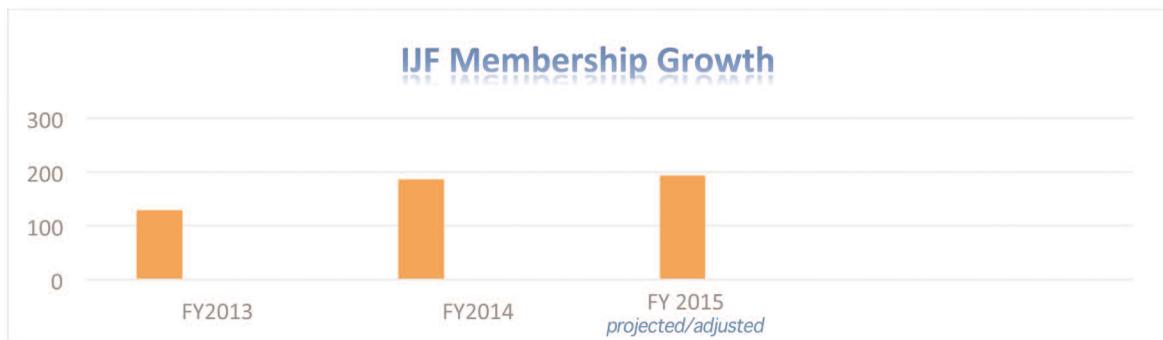
- Families, Children & Survivors - continued growing their Community Action Teams in the Austin and Palatine Townships to help improve the lives of military and veteran families through library reading programs and resource fairs;
- Financial Literacy - conducted training webinars and held information sessions to explain the financial resources available to the military;



- Homelessness & Housing - hosted a resource Summit for homeless veterans at the James Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago to raise awareness and collaboration between service providers;
- Legal Support - hosted a Continuing Legal Education for civilian attorneys to certify them in filing VA appeals for claimants; and
- Women Veterans - hosted a Women Veterans Outreach Think Tank to discuss and create best practices for reaching, accessing and appealing to women veterans.



IJS membership also grew, with the welcoming of 57 additional SMVF-serving organizations for a total of 186 organizations at the end of this summary period.





## Performance Measures and Impact - For SMVF

During FY2014, IJF saw a great increase in the use of the web-based referral system, with 464 referrals made to assist SMVF via the IJF website - a total of 644 since IJF's inception by the end of this summary period.



- **No Wrong Door:** After struggling through six different attempts to find assistance for a Korean widow, she reached out via the IJF community and found the right resource. **"It is wonderful to work with an organization that makes helping take care of service members, families, and veterans, their top priority."** - *Janice Laging, FACS, Crestwood Armory*
- **Boots on the Ground:** IJF member, American Red Cross, learned of a veteran family's need for assistance in moving into their new home. Through local relationships built in an IJF Local Collaborative, the Austin Community Action Team, and the IJF member community rallied. **"In order to best assist this client, I looked to IJF and Austin Community Action Team Partners."** - *Michelle McSweeney, American Red Cross*

## Funding & Support

For this fiscal year, financial support has been provided by grants to The Impact Center (TIC) for IJF's benefit. TIC was hired and provided organizational support during the initial activities of IJF until December 2013. During this summary period, TIC received grant monies for the benefit of IJF from the McCormick Foundation in the amount of \$100,000 and from the GPD Charitable Trust in the amount of \$50,000. The specific expenditures are outlined as follows:

- Expenditures
 

Project Management and Overhead .....	\$45,000
Ongoing Website Improvement.....	\$52,000
Event Planning and Expenses .....	\$53,000
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>

ROBERT R.  
**MCCORMICK**  
 FOUNDATION

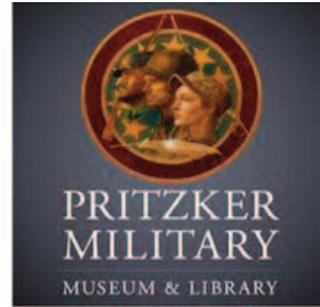




- In-kind website hosting for the IJF website ([www.illinoisjoiningforces.org](http://www.illinoisjoiningforces.org)) is provided by the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, a non-profit member of IJF; valued at approximately \$3,000 for this period. In addition, IDVA paid invoices in the amount of \$20,301 for continued web development of the IJF platform. The website content is updated and maintained by the IJF Admin Team and maintenance and updates are provided by the contractor.



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- AmeriCorps Member Support - IDVA assigns two full-time AmeriCorps members to support IJF activities. These members were secured through the Points of Light Veteran Leader Corps (VLC) program, in which IDVA contributes a total of \$2,400 towards the living stipend provided to these members for an 11-month term of service.



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- In-kind/Staff Support - In addition to the program aspects outlined above IDVA and IDMA have dedicated significant in-kind/staff support to develop, launch, maintain and grow IJF programming and products. This includes significant hours of personal involvement by the IDVA Director, Assistant Director, General Counsel, newly-hired IDVA senior staff member and IJF Senior Program Manager as well as by the IDMA J-9 Leadership and Staff teams. For this year's Summit, IDMA and IDVA provided the printing and event staffing and the Union League Club of Chicago, once again provided in-kind support for the venue fees and equipment, a value of about \$10,000.



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- In-kind Time and Leadership of Working Group Chairs - The day-to-day work of IJF Working Groups - from meetings to projects or policy meetings - is supported by significant volunteer time and leadership of the Working Group Chairs, each of whom is elected by his or her Working Group. These Chairs who represent their organization as part of IJF, convene and lead their working groups, work as part of the Executive Committee, updated their working group landing page on the IJF website, and much more.



With these contributions, IJF was able to host its second annual Summit, bringing together most of its member organizations for the following purposes: Working Group break-out sessions, conduct Working Group progress reports and goal-setting, recognize high-performing organizations with certificates of appreciation, iterate priorities for FY 2015, and introduce new IDVA staff hired to administratively support IJF, including a Senior Program Manager. In addition, IDVA procured funding through state channels, to hire a veteran-owned small business that could continue the web development and maintenance of the IJF website. The website continues to provide a SMVF-facing, searchable, web resource and directory for those in need of assistance as well as provide a resource to member organizations for posting events, uploading resource documents, and information sharing.

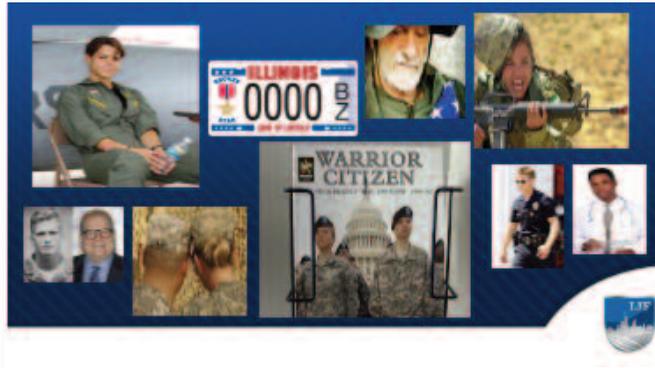
Not including the cost of salary and benefits paid to the IJF Senior Program Manager, other IDVA expenditures attributable to IJF for FY14 included:

1. Cost of (2) VLC members hired through Points of Light	\$3,000
2. Cost of Web Developer	\$20,301
3. Travel for VLC Member to attend IJF Events	\$891
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$24,192</b>

# Progress for 2014 Strategic Priorities



The IJF leaders and Executive Committee maintained the following priorities for FY2014 and conducted the following related activities to further these priorities:



## 1. Strengthening Military/Veteran Cultural Competency in Illinois

- Created an IJF Training Committee comprised of 1 or 2 members from each Working Group, led by the Senior Program Manager, which combined and convened to brainstorm, create, develop, draft and finalize a standardized IJF Military Cultural Competence training;
- In conjunction with IDMA, established and planned a 2-day Military Immersion Training for 36 civilian service providers without prior military service, to spend two days with the Illinois Army National Guard at the Marseilles Training Facility, providing them with a military-like experience and the standardized cultural competence training, to develop their awareness, understanding and appreciation for SMVF perspectives and issues; and
- Development of 2 different standardized presentations for raising community awareness of IJF; an organization-facing and a SMVF-facing presentation.

**"The training was intense, eye-opening and inspiring. I feel that I have a little bit better understanding of what these men and women experienced and that is invaluable in reaching out now to assist them."**

*- Peg Saintcross, Program Manager, Legacy Corps, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois*



## 2. Increasing Website Use and Activity to Enhance IJF Network

- Increase IJF Member use of website features to build a more active and robust online database
  - o Continued to provide on-call or in-person training and assistance for IJF members who need help using the website
  - o Enhance website onboarding for new members—including one-on-one technical assistance (by phone or in person), website orientation by mentor organization and/or IJF Admin Team member
  - o Revised and maintained tracking to provide IJF Member Activity Recognition to incentivize website participation and referral receipt and activity for SMVF



- Increase public use of the IJF website through outreach and public relations
  - o Utilize National Guard network to advertise IJF through its communications channels, marquees, and promoting IJF through posters and business cards
  - o Created IJF Twitter and maintained content and feed during events
  - o Revised brochures and assisted with adding IJF logo to event announcements
  - o Participated in TV and radio PSA opportunities and VetTalk Radio interviews to promote awareness of IJF and its website, increasing the scope of the ongoing public relations campaign
  - o Conducted targeted outreach to potential member organizations through recommendations of Working Groups and their various professional associations.
  - o Published a quarterly IJF electronic newsletter with special edition messages about the Summit and other training events.



## 2015 Strategic Priorities

Anticipating that the IJF Foundation Act will be signed into law by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn during FY2015, the priorities for the IJF Foundation as it forms a Board of Directors and stands up, will be:

1. Incorporate and gain 501(c)(3) status with the United States and Illinois governments;
2. Institutionalize Operations to create organizational processes, policies, and filings;
3. Hire an Executive Director for development and operational support;
4. Establish Programming for educational events, organizational grants, and an annual Summit; and
5. Revamp Web Content, Function, & Design to fix glitches, add reporting capabilities, upgrade functionality, improve geographic pinning and search, and improve the user interface and experience.

In addition to these strategic priorities which revolve around the transition of IJF to a non-profit status, the following items will continue to be ongoing priorities for IJF as a matter of course and will be spearheaded by the IJF Board of Directors for FY2015:

- Recruitment new IJF members, specifically targeting direct service providers in geographically diverse areas of the state;
- Foster impactful and strong collaborations between Working Groups and their missions with strategic programming to fill gaps in current services; and
- Continue to identify opportunities to strengthen the IJF organization and framework.

## Conclusion



From its inception until the end of FY2014, IJC has continued to be a highly engaged and increasingly impactful organization. In February 2014, IJC gained national recognition for its leading model of bringing organizations together to create positive community change and impact. Experts at the national level - including leadership of the Chairman of the Joint Chief's Office of Warrior & Family Support, the White House's Joining Forces Initiative, and the National Guard Bureau - recognize the great power in the IJC model and regularly advocate it as a best practice. IDVA and IDMA have already fielded requests from multiple states regarding how to stand up a statewide collaborative effort akin to IJC.

Having met our 2014 goals of growing our membership and creating valuable education to providers and connections between its members, we look forward to making fast strides to transition IJC with a warm handoff, from being housed with IDVA to standing alone and operating fully as a public-charity with 501(c)(3) status. This transition will ensure IJC's long-term stability, sustaining support for member organizations, and increased quality of programming to impact and enhance the lives of our Illinois citizens that are serving or have served.

## Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of IJC is led by the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and is comprised of member organization-elected Chairs of the IJC Member Working Groups, plus representatives from each level of local government to include representation from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, Illinois Department of Military Affairs, Cook County, City of Chicago, and the Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title &amp; Organization</b>	<b>Role with IJC</b>
Erica Borggren	(Former) Director of Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA)	(Former) Chair of Executive Committee*
Rodrigo Garcia	Acting Director of Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs	Chair of Executive Committee*
COL Randy Sikowski	Chief of the Joint Staff, US Army, Illinois National Guard	IDMA Representative to IJC
Thomas Miller	Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health	Behavioral Health WG Chair
Steven Fixler (followed by) Patrick Cornet	Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission of DuPage County filled two roles with IJC for FY2014. Patrick Cornet, Veteran Service Officer, IDVA, elected Chair of B&EA in FY2015.	IACVAC Representative to IJC (role maintained by Steve Fixler)*; Benefits & Emergency Assistance WG Chair (role assumed by Patrick Cornet)*
Amy Sherman	Associate Vice-President of Policy and Strategic Alliances, Council for Adult & Experiential Education	Education WG Chair



<b>Name</b>	<b>Title &amp; Organization</b>	<b>Role with IJF</b>
Bridget Altenburg	Chief Operations Officer, Veterans Forward at National Able Network	Employment & Job Training WG Chair
Kelcey Liverpool	Co-founder and CEO of Kids Rank	Families, Children & Survivors WG Chair
Akeela White (followed by) LaKrisha Lindo	Assistant Attorney General of Illinois's Military and Veterans' Rights Bureau; followed by LaKrisha Lindo, Contractor, Army OneSource	Financial Literacy WG Chair
Katie Tuten	Program Development and Project Manager, Catholic Charities	Homelessness & Housing WG Chair
Jason Vail	Senior Attorney/Chief Counsel, Legal Services, American Bar Association	Legal Support WG Chair
Nicole Mandeville	Associate Director Entrepreneurial Program, Women's Veteran Initiative, Women's Business Development Center	Women Veterans WG Chair
Edward S. Landreth, PsyD	Mental Health Lead, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Great Lakes Health Care System, Veterans Integrated Service Network (10N12)	USDVA Representative to IJF

*\*Reflects information as of December 2014 (date of publication)*

## Staff Leadership



The IJF Administrative Team is dedicated to supporting the operations of IJF through organization of meetings, coordination of events, assisting with membership onboarding, and providing personalized services to all member organizations. The main staff members involved in the day-to-day operations are listed as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title &amp; Organization</b>	<b>Role with IJF</b>
Elisabeth Pennix	Senior Program Manager for IJF, Women Veterans, Gold Star Families, and VLC; IDVA	Senior Program Manager
Anthony Bellin	Americorps/VLC, IDVA	IJF Program Manager (Springfield)
Kathy Johnson	Americorps/VLC, IDVA	IJF Program Manager (Chicago)
LTC Maurice Rochelle	Deputy J-9, Joint Forces Headquarters, IDMA	IJF IDMA Liaison
MAJ Mindi Ernst	Family Program Director, Illinois National Guard	ILNG IJF Program Support



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