

**Veterans of Foreign Wars  
National Veterans Service  
Proficiency Training Conference  
April 26-29, 2026**

Welcome to the 2026 Proficiency Training Conference presented by the VFW National Veterans Service (NVS). The goal of our training is to ensure that you have the knowledge and skills to represent veterans, their families, and survivors with their claims before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Having selected to attend virtually, all classes will be via Zoom with a dynamic instructor and NVS staff member as a moderator. Please refer to the instruction sheets provided with this letter to learn how to access Zoom.

You are going to really enjoy this course! We have excellent instructors and content that applies to your daily work and changes within VA. Please take note of the following instructions so you may get the most out of this training.

**Attendance**

You must attend every class. Review your agenda to know the time, taking into consideration the time zone, for your classes. The Zoom link for the classes is listed on the agenda. The same link will be used for the duration of the conference.

Let Keith Garrison know if you experience a health problem or personal issue that keeps you from attending a class. His contact information is (202) 815-7241 or kgarrison@vfw.org.

**The NVS Director or Deputy Director are the only ones who can excuse you if you must leave before the end of the conference.**

Use a computer or tablet, not a cell phone, for the virtual training. If you have any issues with not being able to connect via computer/tablet, let Keith know.

We recommend using headphones to help reduce feedback and provide a clearer sound.

**Dress**

The dress code for this conference is business casual. We have several external instructors, and we need to reflect a professional organization. Acceptable attire consists of slacks, skirts, or pressed khakis, a collared shirt or blouse, polo shirt or golf shirt, a dress sweater or cardigan, and dress shoes. VFW polo shirts are encouraged but not mandated.

If, during this conference, you are observed wearing any item that is not authorized in the dress code or that would reflect poorly upon the VFW, you will be required to remove or change the article of clothing.

### **Course Materials**

Copies of the course materials will be available in the Resources section of the VFW OLP before the start of the conference. Refer to the “Accessing the Course Materials” document that you received with these guidelines for instructions on how to access the course materials.

### **During the Class**

During the class sessions, please pay attention and stay actively engaged.

Find a quiet place, free of distractions, for the virtual training. If you prefer to conduct the training in your VFW office, please close the door and have a sign that indicates you are in training.

Keep your webcam on and focused on you throughout the training. If you need to step away for a restroom break, you may temporarily turn off the camera.

Be respectful and professional during the class. All posts to the chat box are recorded and need to be professional and courteous. Be respectful to instructors and other students – wait for your turn to talk. Do not dominate the class by telling stories, as this will likely cause your class to get off track and there will not be enough time to cover all of the required material.

Questions are encouraged and the instructors expect them. Just please do not use the class time to ask advice about a personal issue or specific case during class as a detailed conversation is usually needed to provide correct advice. If you have questions or relevant comments that you would like to address during the class, place a question mark (?) in the chat box or type your question and wait for the facilitator to call on you before unmuting your microphone. Please keep your entries in the chat box relevant to the topic at hand and allow the instructor or facilitator to answer any questions that may arise in the chat box.

### **Testing**

You will take a test on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at the end of the conference using the Online Learning Portal.

**This test will be administered online during the conference; there is no option to complete the test at a later date. All attendees are required to complete the test online during the conference on Wednesday April 29, 2026.**

If you do not take the end-of-conference test during the testing period, you will receive a 0%, and your supervisor and/or Department Commander will be notified.

For more information regarding the end-of-conference test, refer to the “Accessing the Test” document that you received with these guidelines.

Although the test is open reference, it must be your own independent work: do not consult with anyone while taking your test. Test scores are used in deciding which service officers should be recertified for accreditation. Those who fail tests or fail to take tests may not be recertified.

### **Miscellaneous**

All attendees are perceived as representatives of our great organization and must act accordingly while attending training. The NVS views harassment of any type (racial, religious, age-related, sexual, or ethnic) as unacceptable and has a zero-tolerance policy. Attendees will professionally conduct themselves and refrain from any kind of harassing behavior. All reported complaints and instances will be fully investigated and may result in the offending party being removed from the training environment and referred to their supervisors or Departments for further action.