



STATE OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
789 Vermont National Guard Road
Colchester, Vermont 05446-3099

August 6, 2021

Dear Service members, employees and families,

About 18 months ago a team from the National Guard Bureau's Office of Complex Investigations arrived in Vermont to initiate an Organizational Assessment that I asked them to conduct. Why? Because while I knew the Vermont National Guard is an outstanding organization, I also knew we had certain areas with opportunities for improvement.

I asked them to review and assess several specific areas. As suspected, the climate survey revealed the Vermont National Guard to be a healthy, high-performing organization. The team also provided 35 recommendations to improve.

This is not only good, I am excited to finally have these recommendations in hand so we may continue to lean in to the change necessary to make this great organization even better.

While COVID-19 restrictions significantly delayed the publication of this assessment, we have not been idle. In respect to every one of the first six areas I asked the Team to examine, we have already made progress:

In regards to the first two focused on misconduct, we have just published our first status of discipline reports to provide as much openness as we are able, sharing what administrative actions we have taken as an organization in Fiscal Year 2021. Also, this last spring I appointed our first Provost Marshal and Deputy to serve as liaisons with local law enforcement and conduct internal investigations as appropriate.

In April, we shifted the State Equal Employment Manager to report directly to me, this way the Manager has direct access to share with me what reports and challenges the organization faces regarding Equal Opportunity for all.

In the areas of hazing/bullying as well as policies, the State Equal Opportunity Manager recently published a new, comprehensive Anti-Harassment Policy that encompasses all forms of harassment, to include sexual harassment, with refined reporting mechanisms and fail-safe's installed to hold offenders accountable.

A couple of years ago we instituted a new Competency Based Hiring Policy as well as the Army Officer Career Management Plan. The Vermont Air National Guard is also in the process of developing an Enlisted Promotion Program; all of which work to ensure we select the right people, for the right position, at the right time – and in a method that is as transparent as possible.


Finally, in addition to the new Anti-Harassment policy, we have further refined many equal opportunity and sexual assault prevention and response policies over the last year.

We still have work to do, and I am incredibly proud of how far we have come in the years since I first took office. Recently, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau invited me to sit on the General Officer's Steering Committee to work on national policy to address sexual harassment, sexual assault and suicide prevention. This prestigious appointment is not a reflection of me, but rather a testament of the hard work and innovation of the staff, program managers and other leaders who continue to set the Vermont National Guard apart.

As I promised from the beginning of this assessment, the results are now fully available for you to review on vtguard.com/Org.-Assessment. Please take the time and read through all of the findings and recommendations the Team provided – and hold me and other leaders accountable for implementing them. The Team from NGB did exactly what I asked them to: tell us how we can make the Vermont National Guard even better.

Put the Vermonters Ahead!

Sincerely,


GREGORY C. KNIGHT
Major General
The Adjutant General