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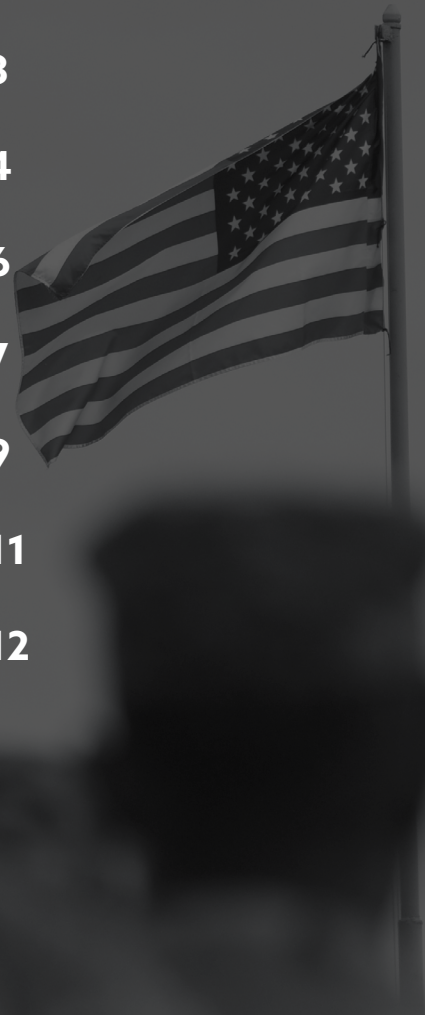
Final Report

October 2022

MASSVETS
FINANCIAL BENEFITS FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

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Executive summary



ASG is pleased to present the final report for the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services' MASSVETS benefits –formerly known as Annuity and Chapter 115 benefits– rebranding campaign. **The objective of this 7-week long campaign was to rebrand the existing Annuity and Chapter 115 benefits into one benefit package offered to qualifying veterans and their families, exclusively by the state of Massachusetts.**

The Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services had as top priority, developing a campaign that would appeal to and reach the hardest to reach Veteran populations within The Commonwealth in an effort to bring awareness to the benefits they have earned through their service as well as to connect Veterans with local Veteran Services Officers who can continue to assist them in the future, if needed. Through a print, digital, video and radio campaign depicting real life stories of Massachusetts Veterans and their families, the ASG team helped spread awareness of the MASSVETS benefits to communities throughout the state. This report summarizes the strategies utilized and the emergent findings from our campaign that led to:



642 lead generation forms being filled out



10.1k clicks



1.78 million impressions



Discovery Phase Strategy

For this initial phase of the project ASG advanced thoughtful research to gather and analyze data on Massachusetts Veterans, assessing demographics and socioeconomic variables relevant for the benefits program and the rebranding campaign and creating a tool to summarize the findings. The objectives on this initial stage were to 1) ensure that decisions on creative concepts and digital/communications strategies were driven by actual data on Massachusetts Vets, and 2) improve the chances of the campaign reaching its relevant audience: veterans and their families that fit the disability and economic/financial criteria of the DVS benefits. In summary, the aim was for the DVS benefits information to reach the highest number of eligible people possible while also ensuring that it reached those who hardest to reach demographics who would benefit from the campaign the most.

ASG looked to the 2020 Veteran Status tables from the American Community Survey 5-year estimates at the town/municipality level. With this information ASG took its first step: creating a “priority score” to select the most relevant towns in the Commonwealth for this campaign, using the disability ratio (share of vets with any type of disability) and the poverty ratio among veterans. Getting the best results for this campaign involved not only targeting the correct audience in terms of benefits eligibility, but also trying to maximize the reach to that audience.

Furthermore, ASG found that data on veterans’ widows and families is not available, a population that is also eligible for the benefits. To account for these concerns, ASG chose a balancing act-approach between specificity in terms of the priority score and the overall volume of people the campaign would target. ASG then proceeded to weigh the priority score by 1) the share of the state’s veterans residing in each town and 2) the percentage of the town population that were veterans. After weighting the priority score, ASG selected the top 50 towns out of the 351 in the commonwealth according to the priority score. The results are shown in table 1 for the weighted and unweighted score and compared to the total veteran population in the state. It stands out that after weighting ASG increased the reach of the campaign to an extra 11% of the commonwealth veterans while still targeting those that were more in need as the disability and poverty ratio for this weighted audience were still higher compared to the total veteran population in Massachusetts. Moreover, ASG increased the target audience to 39.2% of the total state population compared

Discovery Phase Strategy

with 32.8% before weighting, increasing the likelihood of targeting veterans’ families and widows not accounted on ASG’s base data.

The analysis conducted at this stage was merged with veteran demographics for the selected towns (age, ethnicity) and with data on English proficiency and other languages spoken for the general population on the selected towns to inform further steps on creative concepts and campaign placement strategies. Further detail can be found in the public interactive tool [here](#).

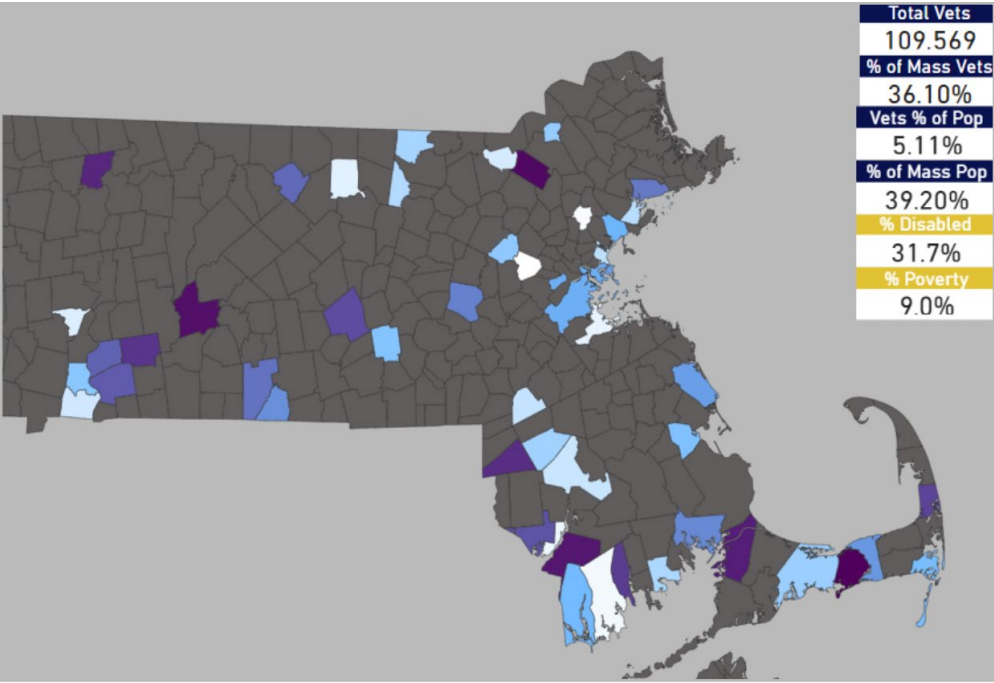


Figure 1: Top 50 Towns for target audience according to weighted priority score

TABLE 1	Overall Mass Vet Pop (Base data)	Priority Score Unweighted	Priority Score Weighted
Veterans	303,354	78,325	109,569
% of Massachussets Veterans	100%	25.80%	36.10%
Veterans as % of total population	5.54%	4.37%	5.11%
% of Disabled Veterans	27.80%	32.90%	31.70%
% of Veterans in Poverty	5.80%	10.10%	9%

Creative Development

As a part of the discovery phase for this campaign, ASG conducted 5 in-depth interviews with Veterans Services Officers across the state, identified by the DVS team. The findings of these interviews shed clarity on how few veterans and veteran families knew about the existence of the MASSVETS benefits, formerly known as the Annuity and Chapter 115 benefits.

After analyzing the brand, the campaign's goal, the target, and the research information, ASG's creative team developed creative concepts for the brand identity, logo and names to give Chapter115 and annuity benefits more memorable identity.

Three draft brand identity and campaign concepts were presented to the DVS team. The chosen concept showcased the stories of real Veterans in the commonwealth who were currently accessing benefits, and their experiences with the benefit programs. The concept of Your benefits, our commitment embodied the spirit of the campaign and was intended to educate and inform veterans and their families that additional benefits were available to them as the state's commitment to honoring their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their loved ones.

The creative assets ASG designed for the campaign included:

- Naming workshop and identity development
- Radio Spots
- One 30-second video in Spanish and English
- Three 10-second digital videos in English
- Web banners and gifs
- Over thirty digital billboards
- Transit and print ads

* Please see Appendix for links to all creative assets

Earned and Paid media

Overview

The communications strategy for this campaign consisted of 2 elements, a targeted Media Buy and a series of in-depth interviews secured through earned media engagements. These individual components worked simultaneously to raise general awareness of the existence of the MASSVETS benefits and guide possible qualifying veterans and their families to the newly created MASSVETS website where they could search for resources and fill out a lead generation form which would be forwarded to local Veterans Services Officers for follow up.

Our discovery phase data showed that adults over the age of 55 are more likely to receive their information through traditional radio and television outlets. To maximize our campaign efforts, ASG's communication team supported by ASG's data team, chose the target areas, and outlets, to use for our campaign, by identifying locations with a high population of veterans ages 55 and over, this coupled with our digital campaign which targeted areas with veteran populations under the age of 55, allowed for our campaign budget to go farther while guaranteeing the areas with the highest populations of veterans in the state were targeted.

Media Buy

Outlet	Type of Media	Number of Spots throughout the 7 Week Campaign
iHeart Radio - KISS 108fm	Audio	69
"La Mega - WAMG, WLLH, WORC"	Audio	36
La Voz North Shore	Print Ad	3
El Pueblo Latino	Print Ad	3
El Mundo	Print Ad	6
Middlesex East	Print Ad	5
Telemundo	Video	68
PATCH.com	Online Banner redirecting to www.mass.gov/MASSVETS	n/a

Earned and Paid media

In total, the digital results of the English ad did above industry standards. For example, the CTR, Clickthrough Rate, which measures how often people click an ad after it's shown to them and helps us understand the effectiveness of the ad, was 9.38%, which was almost triple the industry benchmark which is 3.27%.



Digital media

The DVS digital strategy was developed to create awareness about the MASSVETS benefits (formerly known as Chapter 115 and the annuity benefits) and ensure the campaign information reached the target demographic identified during the Discovery Phase of the campaign.

ASG aimed to create a lead generation campaign to identify prospective beneficiaries and capture contact information and insights that could then be shared with local VSOs. For this campaign, ASG worked with the DVS team to create a lead generation form that captured information from beneficiaries that needed guidance and support from DVS. This lead generation form was crucial in developing a database of prospective qualifying veterans and family members of veterans that DVS can leverage to contact and educate about the MASSVETS benefits among other benefits. In total, **642** people filled out the lead generation form during our 7-week-long campaign and are now part of the DVS database.

ASG's Discovery Phase data helped ASG to determine that veterans over the age of 54 are less likely to get their information from smartphones and social media. Therefore, ASG's digital team chose the top 20 cities with the most significant number of younger veterans to target for its digital campaign.

For the awareness campaign, ASG originally ran both English and Spanish ads. Unfortunately, the Spanish ad ran for one week and never received any traction. At that point, ASG's digital team decided the best way to proceed was to shift the budget of the Spanish ad to the English ad.

Language	Impressions	Clicks	Lenght of Time
English	21,229	1,753	1 week
Spanish	170	9	1 week

Digital media

In total, the digital results of the English ad did above industry standards. For example, the CTR, Clickthrough Rate, which measures how often people click an ad after it's shown to them and helps us understand the effectiveness of the ad, was **9.38%**, which was almost **triple** the industry benchmark which is 3.27%.

Language	Total Impressions	Total Clicks	CTR	Lenght of Time
English	70,404	6,601	9.38%	7 weeks

Next, was the YouTube campaign. For this, ASG used three videos of real Massachusetts based veterans speaking about their experiences with the MASSVETS benefits programs. The YouTube videos were shown on a Google platform as well. For this part of the digital campaign, ASG had a different objective; instead of a lead generation campaign, ASG wanted to create awareness about the MASSVETS benefits, so our videos linked directly to the Mass.gov/MASSVETS website, where users could find our more information about MASSVETS amongst other benefits available to them.

The YouTube campaign featured both English and Spanish ads. For the YouTube ads ASG measured the "View rate". This measures the percentage of people who watched the video after they first saw the video or thumbnail. The industry standard rate is 29.6%, and the ad rate for our campaign was 30.95%. The higher the view rate, the greater the engagement shown by the audience.

Language	Impressions	Views	View Rates	Clicks
English	578,774	179,103	30.95%	220

The Spanish YouTube ad was a 30-second video with Spanish audio. The view rate was below industry standard at 19.61%.

Language	Impressions	Views	View Rates	Clicks
Spanish	1,135,230	222,640	19.61%	3,293

Lessons Learned/ Recommendations

Lessons Learned

Through our interviews with local VSOs, ASG learned that VSOs were struggling to outreach to and locate hard to reach veteran populations and their families who might benefit from their support. ASG suggested that the DVS team create a lead generation form which would both help minimize the number of inquiry phone calls coming into the Department of Veteran Services as well as help create a list of inquiries for local VSOs to follow up with.

ASG believes more diversity in actors, both in race/ethnic background as well as in lived experience, would have been beneficial to our campaign, however, due to recruitment barriers we were unable to identify more veteran actors.

Recommendations

ASG recommends that DVS do the following regarding their digital efforts:

- Complement the paid digital strategy with an organic strategy on their social media accounts
- Launch more testimonies about the other benefits offered by the Department; videos are an excellent way to communicate with their target demographics, by asking beneficiaries to share their stories
- Leverage extensions in Google Ads by adding a phone number.
- Set up websites in different languages without relying on Google translation in the government website. By doing this, ads in other languages can directly link to the website that matches each language and ads will likely perform better

Appendix

Click to download

List of Creative Assets

- A MASSVETS Logo and visual brand identity
- 1 radio spot in English
- 1 radio spot in Spanish
- 1 30-second video in Spanish
- 1 30-second digital video in English
- 3 10-second digital videos in English
- Over 30 Digital billboard images

Various Print Assets

- Print Ad La Voz North Shore in Spanish
- Print Ad El Pueblo Latino in Spanish
- Print Ad El Mundo in Spanish
- Print Ad Middlesex East in English

Brochures

- PDF Print
- PDF Digital

Editable Files

- Digital
- Print