

Date: August 24, 2021

To: Oneida County Board of Supervisors

From: Veterans Service Officer

Re: Veterans Service Office 2020 Annual Report

Attached is the 2020 Annual Report for the Oneida County Veterans Service Office. The amount of benefits our veterans and their families and survivors received last calendar year was 35% higher than in 2019.


In 2020, between our daily phone calls, appointments, walk-ins, home visits, and electronic communication (Facebook, email, and texts), we averaged more than 19 veteran contacts each work day, which was about 1,300 less than last year, I'm sure due to COVID.

The VA benefits paid to veterans in 2020 reflected on page 1 (minus treatment at VA facilities) illustrates the direct income received by our veterans through their VA benefits was over \$44 million. It's reasonable to assume much of that money was spent right here in Oneida County. This income is beneficial to not only our veterans but the county as well. When a veteran's income is increased through federal dollars, it can mean they need less assistance from the state or county, if they needed it in the first place. It also means more money being spent in our community.

The total cost to operate the Veterans Service Office in 2020 was \$133,878; however, we received a \$10,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs which was used toward my salary thus saving the county \$10,000 and reducing our operating cost.

Just like every other county office, COVID-19 affected our office and our veterans. Both the Assistant CVSO and I worked from home for six weeks then furloughed every other week for another 11 weeks. Business was definitely slower during that time but it pretty much got back to normal by the fall. We still continued to do as many phone vs. in-person appointments as we could but some in-person appointments were unavoidable. The best thing to come out of that situation was our office's web page. We worked countless hours putting together something very detailed and easily understood regarding veteran and survivor benefits. We also attached links to numerous VA forms so we could guide our clients to our web page instead of them having to come in to get them. We are extremely proud of the work we did and we invite you to check it out at co.oneida.wi.us/departments/vs/.

Respectfully submitted,

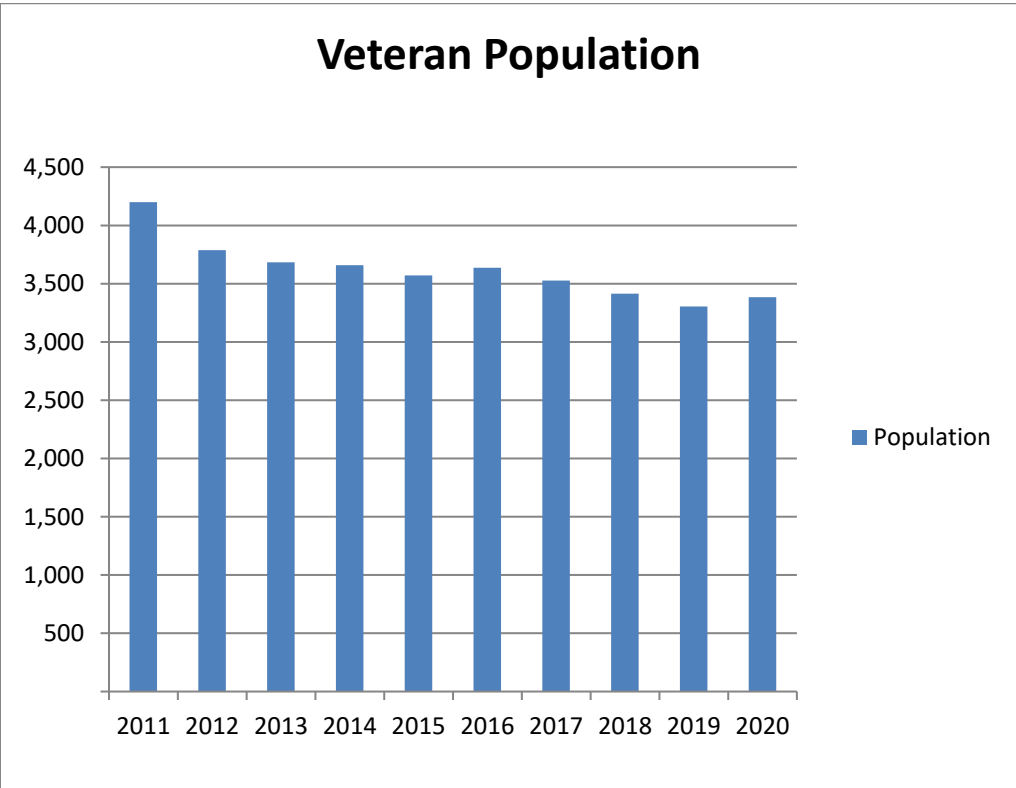
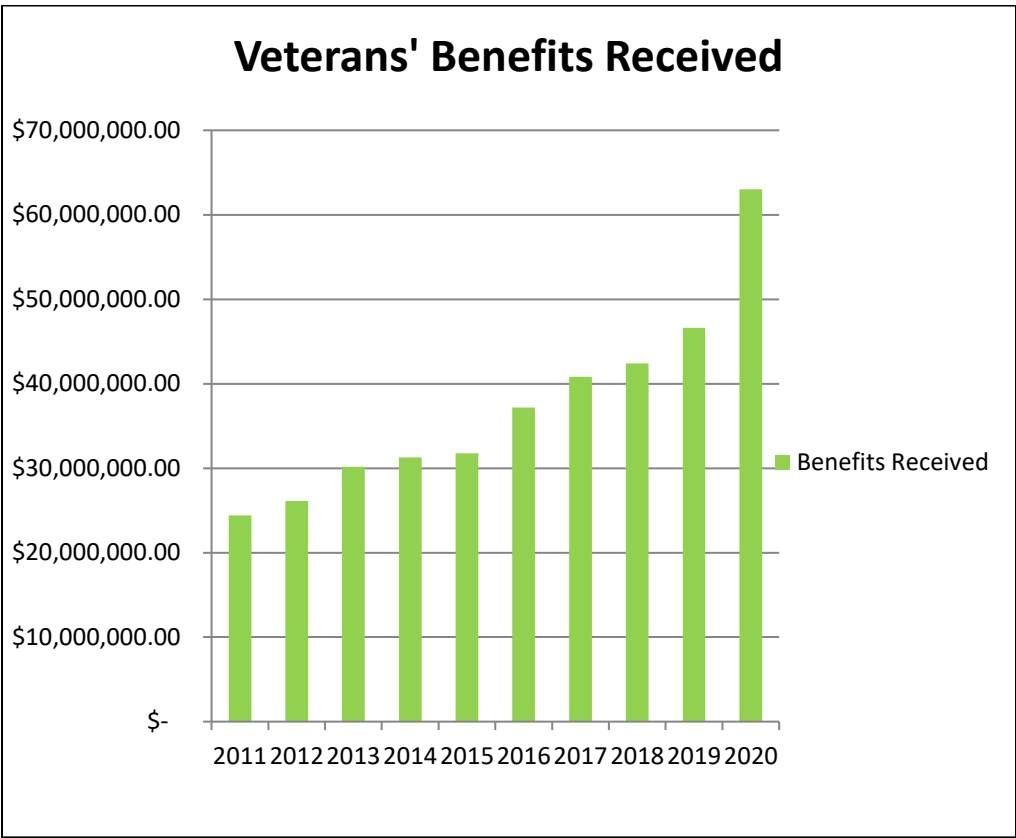


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VA BENEFITS PAID TO VETERANS

<u>Program</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Disability Compensation and Pension	\$18,747,000
Education and Vocational Rehabilitation	627,000
Insurance and Indemnities	414,000
WI Property Tax Credit	360,718
VA Loans	24,142,070
Treatment at VA facilities (cost of)	18,707,000
Federal and State VA benefits received	
By Oneida County veterans	\$62,997,788
Total cost to run the Veterans Service Office (after \$10,000 WDVA Grant is deducted)	*50,855%
Rate of return	

*This means that for every dollar the county spends on the Veterans Service Office, veterans receive \$508.55 in benefits.



OUTREACH, SPEAKING EVENTS, AND OTHER EVENTS

- March 25: CVSO and ACVSO commended working from home as directed due to COVID-19.
- May 4: CVSO and ACVSO began working in the office again; however, CVSO furloughed the weeks of May 4 and May 18, and the ACVSO furloughed the weeks of May 11 and May 25.
- June 10: CVSO attended virtual Town Hall Meeting done by the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center, Iron Mountain, MI.
- June 15: ACVSO furloughed the weeks of June 15, June 29, and July 13. CVSO furloughed the weeks of June 22, July 6, July 20, and August 3.
- August 14: CVSO and ACVSO attended the dedication ceremony for the Northwoods National Cemetery, Harshaw, WI.
- September 2: CVSO attended virtual training on the VA's Aid and Attendance program.
- October 5-9: CVSO attended County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (CVSOA-WI) fall conference in Siren, WI.
- November 11: CVSO and ACVSO had information table at veterans event held at the Rhinelander Veterans Center.
- December 7-9: CVSO attended virtual Advanced Appeals Training put on by the National County Veterans Service Officers Association (NACVSO).

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE BUDGET

The following is a report of the Oneida County Veterans Service Office and Veterans Service Commission budget for January through December 2020.

Receipts

Non-personnel appropriations	\$12,023.00
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Expenses

Telephone and Fax	\$ 517.88
Postage and Box Rent	225.90
Printing and Duplication	16.74
Central Purchasing	1,414.03
Subscriptions	0.00
Membership Dues	270.00
Advertising	542.00
Training/Conference Fees	310.00
Employee Auto Allowance	218.50
Meals-taxable	0.00
Meals, Lodging and Travel	428.00
Gravemarkers and Flags	806.60
Direct Payments	2,409.68
Direct Payments-Transportation	140.00
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Total	\$ 7,299.33

Obviously, COVID was the reason we saved \$4,723.67 in non-personnel expenses. Additionally, we were budgeted for \$138,114.00 in personnel expenses but only spent \$126,578.77 for another \$11,535.23 in savings. Presumably, this is because both the CVSO and ACVSO furloughed every other week for several weeks and also because we did not use our Limited Term Employee at all in 2020.

ONEIDA COUNTY DAV VAN

The Veterans Service Office coordinates the DAV van which in 2019, served 124 veterans from five different counties. This service is free to Oneida County and free to the veterans. If we paid mileage at the VA rate to the Oneida County veterans who used the van, we would pay them \$.415 per mile for an annual total of \$4,764.20. That amount can also be regarded as an annual savings to the county.

Month	Forest County	Langlade County	Lincoln County	Oneida County	Vilas County	Cost Savings (Oneida County only)
January	0	0	0	4	2	\$275.56
February	0	0	0	6	2	\$413.34
March	0	0	0	4	2	\$275.56
April	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.00
May	0	0	0	0	1	\$0.00
June	0	0	0	2	1	\$137.78
July	0	0	0	2	1	\$137.78
August	0	0	0	1	2	\$68.89
September	0	0	1	1	0	\$68.89
October	0	0	0	3	1	\$206.67
November	0	0	0	4	1	\$275.56
December	0	0	0	3	1	\$206.67
Total	0	0	0	30	14	\$2,066.70