

Date: August 23, 2022

To: Oneida County Board of Supervisors

From: Veterans Service Officer

Re: Veterans Service Office 2021 Annual Report

Attached is the 2021 Annual Report for the Oneida County Veterans Service Office.

In 2021, between our daily phone calls, appointments, walk-ins, home visits, and electronic communication (Facebook, email, and texts), we averaged more than 21 veteran contacts each work day.

The VA benefits paid to veterans in 2021 reflected on page 1 (minus the cost of treatment at VA facilities) illustrates the direct income received by our veterans through their VA benefits was over \$46 million. It's reasonable to assume much of that money was spent right here in Oneida County. This income is obviously beneficial to our veterans but it could also be beneficial to 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.

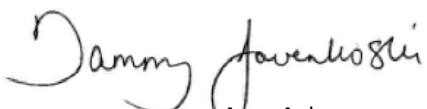
The total cost to operate the Veterans Service Office in 2021 was \$157,167; however, we received a \$10,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs which was used toward my salary thus saving the county \$10,000 and reducing our operating costs.

This year our report contains a couple new items. First, we made of list of the donations we provided for veterans in need. Second, we wrote about a few veterans whose life we were able to impact greatly, if not change. Ultimately, our goal is to do that for every veteran with whom we come in contact.

We'd like to invite you to check out our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/oneidacvso](https://www.facebook.com/oneidacvso) and our website at [co.oneida.wi.us/departments/vs/](https://co.oneida.wi.us/departments/vs/). We try our best to keep our veterans and families informed of the latest benefits information via social media, and we also submit month news articles to the local media for this purpose.

Thank you for allowing us to serve Oneida County veterans and their families. It's not a job for Jason and me, it's a passion.

Respectfully submitted,

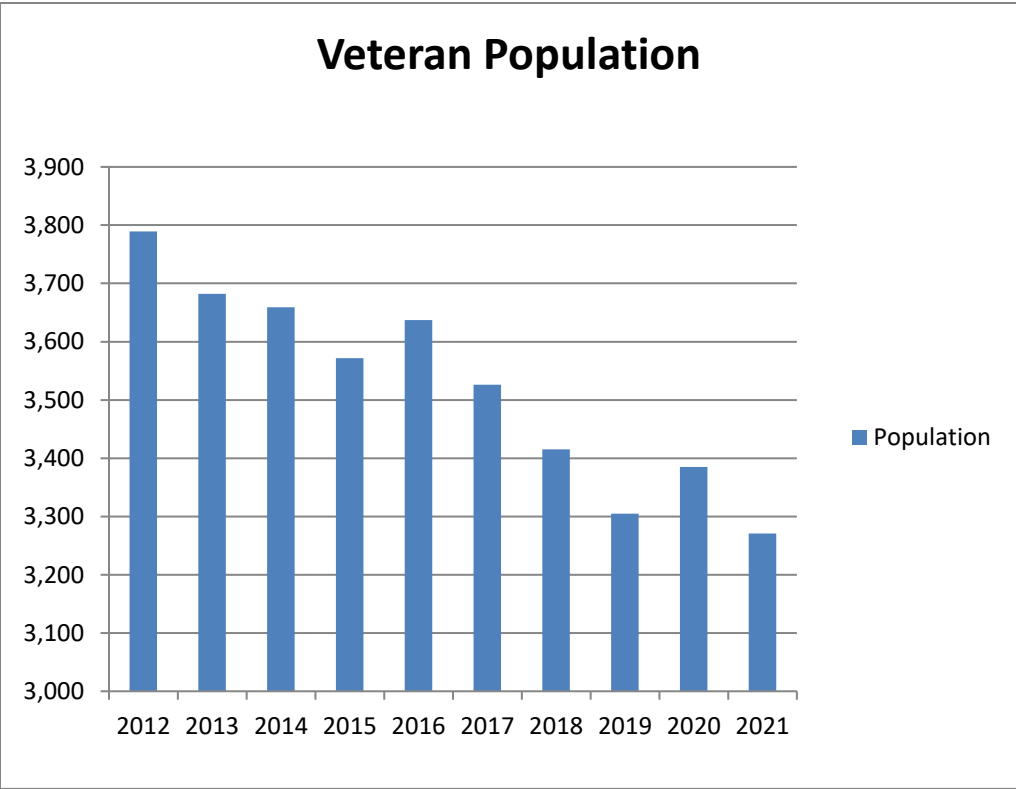
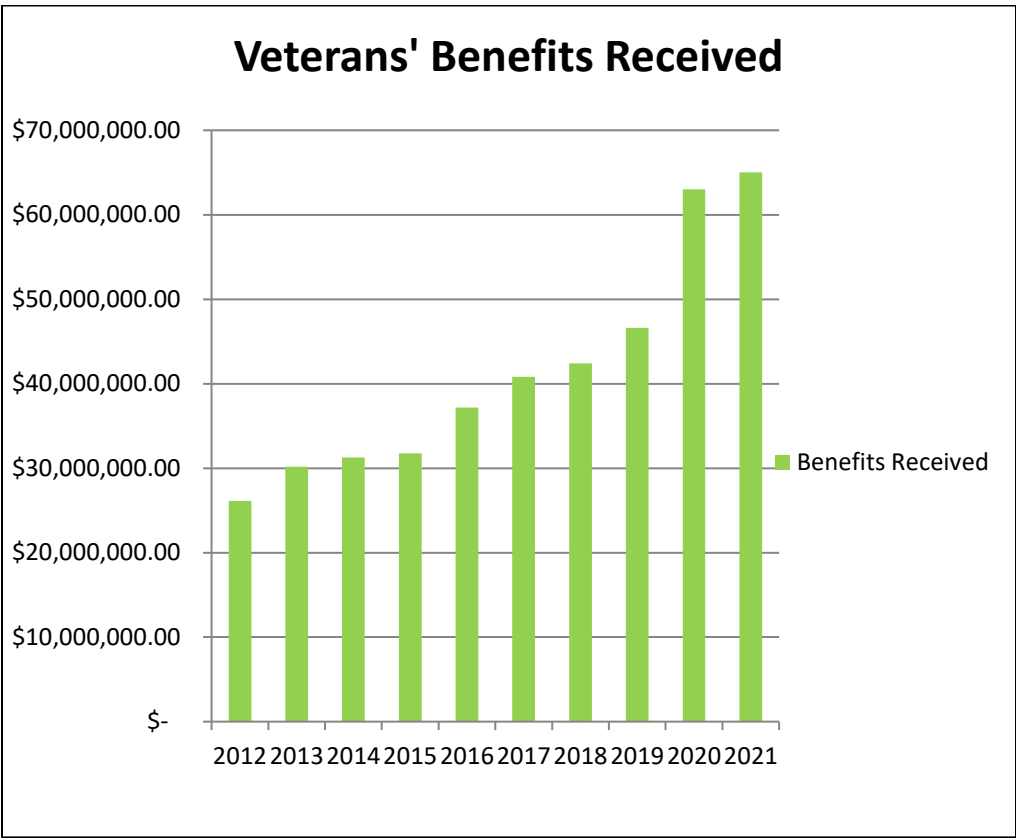


Tammy Javenkoski  
NCCS(SW), USN, retired  
[tjavenkoski@co.oneida.wi.us](mailto:tjavenkoski@co.oneida.wi.us)

**VA BENEFITS PAID TO VETERANS**

<b><u>Program</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Disability Compensation and Pension	\$19,722,000
Education and Vocational Rehabilitation	513,000
Insurance and Indemnities	188,000
WI Property Tax Credit	369,736
VA Loans	25,233,447
Treatment at VA facilities (cost of)	18,990,000
<b>Federal and State VA benefits received</b>	
<b>By Oneida County veterans</b>	<b>\$65,016,183</b>
Total cost to run the Veterans Service Office (after \$10,000 WDVA Grant is deducted)	\$146,167
<b>Rate of return</b>	<b>*44,179</b>

\*This means that for every dollar the county spends on the Veterans Service Office, veterans receive \$441.79 in benefits.



## "FEEL GOOD" STORIES

Helping others and making a difference in their lives is what we always strive to do, so we leave our office almost every day feeling on top of the world. We have our losses some days but most days are victories. Below are just three stories that happened to our veterans in 2021 that made us proud of the work we do.

1. We met a veteran who was a single parent and had an apartment and a job but was still low income. She didn't have a service-connected disability, although she was struggling with chronic back pain, which she was sure was caused by a serious car accident she was in while in the military. Her current vehicle was held together by rust and one day, the rust gave out and the vehicle died. We had heard of an organization called Nation of Patriots, and we knew they might be able to help her with a new vehicle, so we filled out an application and emailed it to them. In less than three weeks, she had a new-to-her vehicle that was beautiful and reliable. She had never had a vehicle that nice in her life. Her service-connected disability claim hasn't been adjudicated yet as of this writing but we feel confident it will be approved. Although her back pain will never go away, a disability rating could increase her income by several hundred dollars per month and certainly be a life-changer for her.

2. A Vietnam veteran, who received a gunshot wound in combat, and his wife recently moved to our county from AZ. Previous to that, he lived in CO. We didn't know of him until his wife called our office and said they received a letter from the VA stating the VA made a mistake when they rated him 100% service-disabled back in 2010 and they were going to lower him to 90% (that's about a \$1,350 cut in benefits each month). We appealed the VA's decision and at the same time, filed a service-connected disability claim for several other disabilities he had but had not filed a claim for. The VA denied our appeal but eventually his claim was approved so he went back up to 100% disability. The other thing to note is when he was 100% prior to having his benefits reduced, he wasn't what the VA calls permanent and total so he wasn't eligible for a lot of benefits veterans who are 100% permanent and total receive. When we got him rated at 100%, it was permanent and total so he received those benefits. He and his wife were so grateful. They told us that the numerous people they worked with in CO and AZ never helped them like we did.

3. A homeless veteran, who was living at Frederick House, came to us to see if we could help him. He was 60% service-disabled for his back and had to quit his job because he was no longer able to drive truck, which is what he did most of his adult life. He was too young for regular Social Security and knew getting Social Security Disability might take years. With the help of a couple other veterans' assistance programs, we got him into an apartment

**"FEEL GOOD" STORIES CONT.**

but his income was still only his VA disability, about \$1,200 per month, so he was struggling. We reopened his claim because his back problems were causing secondary leg problems. He was having a hard time walking and could barely stand upright. He also had depression from his constant pain. It took a while but we were finally able to get him 100% service-connected. Around the same time, he was approved for Social Security Disability. The veteran now lives in a very nice apartment, drives a nice, reliable truck, and has everything he's ever wanted. He's still in constant pain, so his activities are very limited, but he credits us with saving his life. He said before he met us, he felt he had no future but now his future is bright and for the first time in a very long time, he's truly happy.

## VETERANS COMMISSION ASSISTANCE

March 9: Gave veteran two \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards

March 18: Gave veteran \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only card

April 16: Gave veteran \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only card

June 16: Gave veteran two \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards

June 16: Paid \$500 rent for veteran

June 16: Paid \$190.94 WPS bill for veteran

June 28: Gave veteran four \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards (to take another veteran to Tomah for inpatient mental health treatment)

July 1: Paid \$294.14 WPS bill for veteran

July 28: Gave veteran two \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards

August 1: Paid \$294.14 WPS bill for veteran

August 2: Gave veteran \$100 food voucher for Trig's

August 17: Bought new grave marker in the amount of \$750 for veteran. Grave marker was damaged in the cemetery and the VA would not replace it.

August 18: Gave veteran \$200 food voucher for Trig's

August 18: Gave veteran two \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards

September 30: Paid \$1,675 toward walk-in shower for veteran who's in a wheelchair and lives alone. Area Veterans Service Organizations also contributed \$3,550 toward the shower.

October 4: Paid \$700 toward stair lift chair for veteran. Area Veterans Service Organizations also contributed \$3,600 toward the chair lift.

October 20: Contributed \$200 to Boy Scout Troop 660 who helped at our Memorial Day ceremony in 2021 and several years in the past. Contribution was made because they were unable to do fundraisers like they had in the past due to COVID.

November 3: Paid \$188.55 WPS bill for veteran

**VETERANS COMMISSION ASSISTANCE CONT.**

November 3: Paid \$168.93 Spectrum bill for veteran

November 5: Paid \$615 rent for veteran

December 7: Gave veteran two \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards

December 13: Gave veteran two \$25 Kwik Trip gas-only cards

December 21: Paid \$255.93 WPS bill for veteran

## OUTREACH, SPEAKING EVENTS, AND OTHER EVENTS

- May 31: Organized, executed, and attended Rhinelander's Memorial Day ceremony.
- June 7-11: CVSO and ACVSO attended the County Veterans Service Officers Association of Wisconsin (CVSOA-WI) spring conference in the Dells at the Kalahari.
- July 27: ACVSO toured King Veterans Home.
- August 3: ACVSO performed outreach at Camp American Legion.
- October 11-15: CVSO and ACVSO attended the CVSOA-WI fall conference in Fond du Lac.
- October 21: CVSO was guest speaker at Leadership Oneida County.
- October 25-27: ACVSO attended virtual Advanced Appeals Training.
- November 4: CVSO held two information sessions on veterans health care benefits at the Veterans Center in Rhinelander.
- November 10: CVSO was guest speaker at the Women's Club, Sherman, WI, Veterans Day breakfast.
- November 11: Organized, executed, and attended Rhinelander's Veterans Day ceremony. CVSO emceed.
- November 12: CVSO and ACVSO attended James Williams Middle School Veterans Day ceremony.



**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 2021.

**Receipts**

Non-personnel appropriations	\$12,023.00
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**Expenses**

Telephone and Fax	\$ 551.00
Postage and Box Rent	197.00
Printing and Duplication	47.00
Central Purchasing	687.00
Subscriptions	240.00
Membership Dues	200.00
Advertising	250.00
Training/Conference Fees	490.00
Employee Auto Allowance	1,105.00
Meals-taxable	8.00
Meals, Lodging and Travel	2,056.00
Gravemarkers and Flags	882.00
Direct Payments	5,984.00
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Total Spent	\$12,697.00
Transferred from Donations Fund	- 674.00
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2021 Final	\$12,023.00

**ONEIDA COUNTY DAV VAN**

The Veterans Service Office coordinates the DAV van which in 2021, served 59 veterans from four different counties. This service is free to Oneida County and free to veterans. If we paid mileage at the VA rate to the Oneida County veterans who used the van, we would be required to pay them \$.415 per mile for an annual total of \$2,382.10. We believe it would be more than that, however. There are many veterans who aren't eligible for travel pay from the VA and if they could get paid mileage from the county, many more veterans would claim mileage. Other counties that have a veteran population around the same size as Oneida County, easily spend \$10,000 or more each year on mileage for their veterans.

Month	Forest County	Langlade County	Lincoln County	Oneida County	Vilas County	Cost Savings (Oneida County only)
January	1	0	0	3	1	\$204.18
February	0	0	0	4	1	\$272.24
March	0	0	0	4	0	\$272.24
April	0	0	2	3	1	\$204.18
May	1	0	1	1	0	\$68.06
June	0	0	1	2	0	\$136.12
July	0	0	0	3	1	\$204.18
August	0	0	0	6	2	\$408.36
September	2	0	0	2	0	\$136.12
October	0	0	2	3	1	\$204.18
November	1	0	0	3	2	\$204.18
December	0	0	1	1	3	\$68.06
Total	5	0	7	35	12	\$2,382.10

**NACO BLOG**

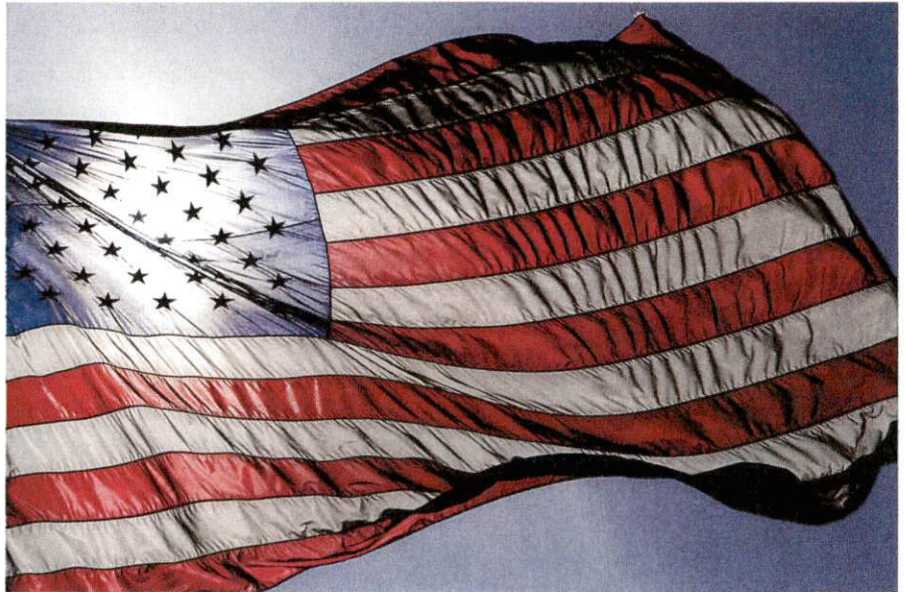
## U.S. House Subcommittee Holds Legislative Hearing on the Commitment to Veteran Support & Outreach Act

—Rachel Mackey, Carlos Aguilera, National Association of Counties

**O**n October 20, the U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HVAC)

Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) held a hearing on pending legislation including the bipartisan Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act (H.R. 4601). Counties support this bill, which would authorize the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide federal resources for states to expand or strengthen County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) to improve their outreach and assistance to veterans.

In 29 states, CVSOs play a key role in helping veterans access a range of service-connected federal benefits, including but not limited to education eligibility and benefits, VA health care eligibility and assistance, mental health resources, financial support and housing resources. While CVSOs are highly effective at generat-



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ing billions of dollars in VA claims, these officers are currently funded almost entirely by counties, which creates challenges for areas with high demand or counties that serve veterans in rural areas. Local resource constraints can significantly hinder the ability of county governments to expand our CVSOs staff and services to sufficiently meet rising case-loads, resulting in long waiting lists that compound ongoing backlog issues at the VA. The CVSO Act would address these resource shortfalls by providing \$250 million over five years in competitive grants to states to strengthen and expand this critical county workforce.

NACo sent a letter to the DAMA Subcommittee leadership thanking them for considering this important legislation and urging passage of the bill. County officials interested in supporting the CVSO Act should send letters of support to Members of Congress today. NACo will continue to advocate for and monitor the legislation and its progress. ♦

## FACT SHEET

# Commitment to Veteran Support & Outreach (CVSO) Act

—Reps. Mike Levin (D-CA), Rosendale (R-MT), Ryan (D-OH), and McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)

Many veterans do not utilize the benefits they have earned because they are unaware or unable. Out of 19 million veterans in the United States, only about nine million are enrolled in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care, five million receive disability compensation, and three million are active VA home loan participants — with other VA programs showing similar rates of underutilization.<sup>1</sup>

## ABOUT COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS (CVSOS)

CVSOS are local county employees who are nationally accredited by the VA to prepare, present, and prosecute VA claims. They are often the first to inform veterans about their eligibility for VA programs and services. They also help enroll veterans into the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and provide assistance on a range of benefits, including service-connected disability compensation, VA home loans, education benefits, and job placement assistance.

Additionally, CVSOS perform much of the VA’s legwork for filing claims in their regions with a modest number of approximately 1,700 accredited representatives throughout 36 states and two Native American Tribes. These employees are responsible for successfully processing nearly \$43 billion in claims annually for direct compensation and pension benefits for veterans. If health care and other benefits are included, that number rises to nearly \$86 billion.<sup>2</sup>

## HOW THE CVSO ACT HELPS

The CVSO Act will authorize \$50 million annually for five years for competitive grants to expand the work of CVSOS or comparable entities. The VA will award grants to states in order to improve outreach to veterans, assist in the development and submittal of claims on behalf of veterans, hire additional CVSOS, and train CVSOS for VA accreditation. To receive funds, a state must submit an application including a detailed plan for the use of these funds, how they will meet underserved veterans’ needs, and other information.

Because veterans treated at the VA are significantly less likely to complete the act of suicide than veterans outside the system,<sup>3</sup> the bill directs the VA to prioritize grants that will serve areas with high rates of veteran suicide, Veteran Crisis Line referrals, or CVSO shortages. To ensure funds are utilized effectively, the VA will develop required outcome measures, track the use of benefits among populations served by grants, and report to Congress annually. Grants must be used to supplement, not replace, state or local funding.

## SUPPORT

The CVSO Act is supported by the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO), National Association of Counties (NACo), National Association of State Departments of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), and several counties and state CVSO associations. Sens. Baldwin (D-WI) and Sullivan (R-AK) are sponsoring companion legislation in the Senate. ♦

### ENDNOTES:

1 Department of Veterans Affairs, [www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/Stats\\_at\\_a\\_glance\\_12\\_31\\_20.PDF](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/Stats_at_a_glance_12_31_20.PDF)

2 National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) analysis of FY2020 Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) Report <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/expenditures.asp>

3 Department of Veterans Affairs, [www.research.va.gov/topics/suicide.cfm](http://www.research.va.gov/topics/suicide.cfm)