

# DANE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

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Joseph T. Parisi  
Dane County Executive

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Daniel A. Connery  
Veterans Service Director

## MEMORANDUM

To: Dane County Personnel & Finance Committee

From: Daniel A. Connery, Veterans Service Director

Date: October 28, 2019

### **Equity** – Dane County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)

Officially, our office has not yet formalized its equity plan; however, I can assure you our office is extremely mindful of its importance. Our plan will be submitted soon.

Inherent to what we do daily are Veterans Affairs programs and benefits centered on underserved and disadvantaged individuals.

The population we serve, military veterans, are a federally protected class. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of what our office does daily is gather evidence, complete paperwork, and submit claims for disabled veterans. Physical or mental disability is another protected class. The men and women who are serving and who have served our nation come from all walks of life, all races, religions, etc. For our staff, a *veteran is a veteran*, regardless of background, skin color, and so on. We take GREAT PRIDE in ensuring all of our veterans, and their family members, are consistently treated with dignity and respect, as we navigate the world of veterans benefits with them. Our CVSO office continues to be a model CVSO office for our state.

We focus on maintaining a diverse staff who embodies the ideals of advocacy and service for all we serve - 85.7% of our staff are veterans; 42.9% of our staff are women; 14.3% of our staff are persons of color.

As previously mentioned, inherent to our job is fighting for what's right, for our veterans. These days, less than 1% of our nation serves in the military. As such, we continue to

solidify our focus on advocacy for veterans to ensure “we” are not forgotten.

Our Vets Ride with Pride bus pass program which started in February 2013 supports more than 150 disabled veterans annually. We are very pleased to have this program, as it provide disabled and/or otherwise financially limited veterans with transportation assistance.

Outreach to vulnerable populations is a focal point for us and this continues to be so as we partner with the Dane County Veterans Treatment Court, Veterans Law Center, collaboration with the Veterans Pod (housing unit) at the Dane County Jail, and through other outreach locations and events, such as the Salvation Army, Triangle Communities Ministry, the Dane County Job Center, and more.

Advocacy through the work we do is always paramount. From September 2018 to September 2019, I was privileged to serve as president of the County Veterans Service Officers Association (CVSOA) of Wisconsin. In doing so, I was able to have a bigger platform to represent Dane County and our CVSOA in awareness and advocacy for veterans’ issues.

Beginning in September 2019, my deputy director, Jim Quattromani, was elected as being a member of our CVSOA’s Legislative Committee, where he is providing input with legislation related to veterans.

### **Sustainability – Dane County Veterans Service Office (CVSO)**

Our office, the highest volume CVSO office in Wisconsin, is proud to maintain paperless files for our clients. Many of our much smaller counterparts still operate in a paper file world.

Approximately 90% of benefit claims initiated through our office are filed electronically. Our electronic claim submissions have increased steadily in the past 24 months.

Through the above efforts, we have been able to see appreciable decrease in office expenses related to paper, envelopes, postage, etc. Expenditures for our printing and office supplies for the three years prior to going paperless (3-year average), when compared to the past 3-year period (2016-2018), is down 22.5%. These processes have helped to increase office efficiencies and “paperwork” is being submitted in a more secure manner.

As systems improve with the VA, we anticipate getting to near 100% with respect to electronic filing and, in turn, we will achieve additional savings and effectiveness.