

County Veterans Service Office

Serving Dane County's veterans and families since 1942, the Dane County Veterans Service Office, or "CVSO," is a well-respected leader within our state. Our office is often viewed as the flagship office among our peers because of our experience, passion, and dedication to serving Dane County's military veterans and their families. We strive for equity to ensure our clients are connected to all possible VA benefits at the federal, state, and local levels. Our clients range in age from their 20s to upper 90s. We have LGBTQ veterans, veterans of color, and veterans from various socioeconomic backgrounds, some being highly vulnerable. Regardless, we are front-line advocates focused on delivering high quality customer service to everyone we serve. We take great pride in treating people with dignity and respect as we strive to connect veterans and families to benefits they have earned.

Fiscal Year 2020 -

The Dane County Veterans Service Office was a key player in helping to bring in over \$84M in VA Disability Compensation and needs-base VA Pension dollars into the households of Dane County veterans.

This is real money going directly in to the pockets of veterans in our county, money being spent in our local communities. This is a perpetual boost on our local economy and it has a direct impact on the quality of life for those we serve.

In the past several years, approximately 1/3 of our annual interactions have been with Gulf War/Post-9/11 veterans, 1/3 Vietnam era, and 1/3 from other eras (WWII, Korea, and Peacetime).

Pandemic -

Inability to maintain face-to-face connection with veterans/families has posed some challenges. Most appointments conducted through phone appointments or Zoom, rather than in-person. Some veterans are not tech-savvy, so adjusting to this changes has been ongoing. Case management duties have increased and attention to detail is extra important.

Phone calls have increased tremendously due to building/office being largely inaccessible.

While the pandemic has brought on some challenges, we, like many others, have realized some efficiencies through virtual/phone appointments and this has been welcomed by some of our clients.

Office Changes from 2020 -

- One staff retirement
- One staff left the office to pursue a career as an administrative law judge with the State of WI.
- Hired two new Assistant Veterans Service Officers – one full-time and one part-time
- Deputy Veterans Service Director position is currently vacant

Ongoing Mission -

Connecting all veterans and families to VA benefits (disability compensation, VA health care, education benefits, and more)

Ending Veteran Suicide - In 2019, there was an average of over 17 veteran suicides daily with 10 of those veterans not being engaged in VA health care (2021 National Suicide Prevention Annual Report).

Ending Veteran Homelessness – HUD-VASH housing vouchers, Valor on Washington veterans housing, other affordable housing units with veterans preference.