

2021 Annual Report

Brown County Veterans Service Office

“Connecting Veterans With Their Benefits”



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Veterans Service Director:

Joseph G. Aulik- Accredited with National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion (AL), Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA), American Veterans (AMVETS), and Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

Senior Benefit Specialist:

Matthew Franklin - Accredited with NACVSO, VFW, AL, and WDVA.

Veterans Benefit Specialist(s):

Nathan Thomas - Accredited with NACVSO, AL, WDVA.

Mike Keon – Accredited with NACVSO, AL, and WDVA.

Paul Pionke – Accredited with NACVSO, DAV, AL, VFW, and WDVA.

Veteran Benefit Specialist/Administrative Assistant/Special Projects:

Gail Nohr – Accredited with NACVSO, AL, and WDVA (Volunteer funded by the WISE Women’s Program and on call for Community Treatment Center)

Accreditations:

The Veteran Administration (VA) accreditation is for the sole purpose of providing representation services to claimants. Yearly training and education requirements are required by the VA in order to maintain accreditation. The accreditation also allow our staff with full access to federal databases and files to further assist our veterans, dependents, and widows and allows the staff to file claims and appeals up to the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington D.C.

- Formal Studies prove veterans receive 50% more benefits and larger awards by using professional veterans service representation (i.e., Brown County Department of Veterans Services) than if he or she file independently or with a non-professional.



Brown County Veteran Service Office Mission Statement:

“We believe in strengthening the lives of our veterans and their families by connecting them with their earned benefits.”

Our Vision:

“Improving the quality of life for Brown County Veterans and their dependents through assessing all available benefits that were earned by the sacrifice and service to their country.”

County Veterans Service Office History

The first County Veterans Service Offices were self-appointed concerned veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) who took it upon themselves to aid and assist the veterans, dependents and survivors of their counties.

- The first CVSO, Leo Promen, was appointed in Fond du Lac County in 1932.
- The WI CVSO Association was established in 1935.
- Legislation was passed in 1946 requiring each county to have a CVSO and required each CVSO to have served in a branch of the Armed Forces (State Statute 45.80).
- Legislation was passed in 1973 authorizing a state grant for the CVSO office.



Why we do what we do: Pure numbers cannot quantify the value of what Brown County Veterans Service Office does, although we do bring a great deal of additional federal funding to the county every year. There is a real, human value, to the service we provide, which is seen and felt by the Brown County veterans and families we help. **Behind the numbers are real lives that have sacrificed mentally and physically to serve their country.**

This is just one of the many stories. This is about a disabled Veterans unable to work for four years, error made by the VA on her claim: Veteran was suffering from her service-connected conditions, to include PTSD she incurred while serving in the military. This veteran experienced Military Sexual Trauma in the service, she was raped. She tried to report the incident, but no one would listen to her story and she tried to bury the memory. She wanted to be a career soldier, but it was unbearable to stay in the service. Due to the MST the veteran has been unable to work for the past four years and was financially and mentally struggling. She reached out to our office to reopen her claim to increase her PTSD rating. Her claim for Individual Unemployability 100% was denied four years earlier as the VA stated she could maintain gainful employment. We looked at the last rating and the diagnosis from the VA physician that was previously issued. Within ten minutes of reviewing the medical diagnosis it was evident that the VA made an error on the claim. Previously, it was not a practice to review, and quality check, all ratings. This was implemented in 2019 with the new hiring with the new CVSO. This is now standard practice due to the fact the VA has a 70% error in the ratings. The doctor stated this veteran was unable to perform physical or sedentary work. A Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE) was filed, and the veteran was awarded Individual Unemployability 100%. The veteran received **\$107,139.00 retroactive** tax-free payment and will receive \$3,439.00 per month. This has opened the door for her to receive the WI Veterans Property Tax refund, and FREE healthcare and college education for her spouse and children, with an estimated value of \$300,000. As you can see, these benefits alone can reach into the thousands of dollars. The veteran will now apply for Social Security Disability and use the VA documentation to win her claim. with an estimated additional \$1,700 per month. She will then receive this payment in addition to his VA payment. This will allow her to now focus on stabilizing her health and quality of life. Without our direction this veteran would not have received this benefit.



Our Impact:

Brown County veterans and their dependents have received a total disbursement of Federal VA benefits of \$124.9 million in 2021, this is an increase of \$10.6 million over 2020.

Furthermore, Compensation and Pension increased over \$4.2 million from \$57.4 million in 2020 to \$61.8 million in 2021. Retroactive cash payouts (tax free) amounted to \$3,000,000 million in 2020. Veterans and their dependents use these non-taxable payouts to pay taxes and purchase goods and services within Brown County.

CVSO Measure of Efficiency in Delivering Federal VA Benefits		
Brown County Total CVSO Budget Investment	Projected Twelve Month VA Benefits Payout	Return on Investment
\$401,000	\$12,000,000	2,393%



STATE BENEFITS WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The office assists veterans and dependents in applying for Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs provides benefits. Application for various benefits are received, adjudicated and awarded or denied based on eligibility requirements.

<u>Type of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>
▪ Aid to Needy Veterans Grant	\$5,650
▪ WI Property Tax Credit	<u>\$1,303,061</u>
Total State Benefits	\$1,308,711

In 2017 our office received a \$13,000 CVS0 Grant from the WDVA. This money was used to enhance services to our veterans.

FEDERAL BENEFITS US DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

<u>Type of Benefit</u>	<u>Amount</u>
▪ Compensation & Pension	\$61,800,000
▪ Education & Vocational Rehabilitation	\$5,504,000
▪ Insurance & Indemnities	\$975,000
▪ Grave Markers & Flags	\$129,000
▪ VA Health Care	\$56,716,000
▪ Federal VA Home Loans (794 Loans)	<u>\$170,810,050</u>
Total Federal Benefits	\$295,394,000
Total of Federal and State Combined Benefits	\$296,702,711
(Increase of \$96,423,840 million over 2020)	



The University of Wisconsin-Madison office performed an analysis of the economic impact Veterans Administration expenditures had on the economy of Brown County for 2019. UW-Madison used the following economic metrics (e.g., jobs, labor income, etc.) and nature of the multipliers (direct, indirect, induced and total) to determine totals. The impacts are summarized as follows:

Brown County VA 2021 Impact

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Total Income	Industry Sales
Direct Effect	296	\$61,799,800	\$61,799,800	\$124,994,800
Indirect Effect	93	\$4,887,700	\$7,221,300	\$13,765,100
Induced Effect	<u>709</u>	<u>\$30,097,500</u>	<u>\$57,761,200</u>	<u>\$100,578,300</u>
Total Effect	1,098	\$99,785,000	\$126,782,300	\$239,338,200

State & Local Government Revenues: **\$7,945,100**

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$473,850,500.00. Over a \$40,265,700 increase over 2020.

- Employment: Jobs, *not* full-time equivalent
- Labor Income: Wages, salaries, proprietor income
- Total Income: Labor income plus all other sources of income (e.g., social security, pensions, etc)
- Industry Sales: Industry revenues
- Direct effect: VA spending
- Indirect effect: Multiplier effect from business to business expenditures
- Induced effect: People (labor) spending income.
- Total effect: Direct plus Indirect plus Induced

Feedback from those we have Served

Our passion is driven from the feedback we received from those we serve because what we do not only improves the quality of life for the veteran but their families and those affects are felt for many generations.

Following are just a few testimonials we received this year:

“I can't thank the two of you enough for your hard work and diligence in representing my disability claims case with the VA. The last couple of years have been difficult for me as it felt like my life was falling apart and I didn't know what was happening. When I started seeing a therapist at the Vet Center she eventually told me that I had PTSD and it was largely related to dealing with large organizations. I share this because without you fighting for me there is absolutely no chance this would have happened. The result is better than I could have imagined and I'm incredibly grateful for the work you do.” Paul

“Seriously, I am so thankful for all your help. You do not know how much stress you have taken off my family! Thank you for all you do not only for me but for everyone else you serve. My life has become so much better because of you.” Mark

“Thank you for all the good help I have received. I am very happy her at my new Assisted Living facility. I never could not have afforded it without your help!” John

By the way; I don't believe I've ever taken a moment to sincerely "Thank You" for your service and your continued ongoing support for our veterans! I'm truly grateful to you for all the guidance you have taken the time to provide me on son's behalf! Sandy – Mother of a Veteran who was suicidal.