

2022 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.

Melisa Young – Accredited with NACVSO, DAV, AL, VFW, and WDVA.

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 who was low income and lived in low income housing for many years. The VA made an error on his claim in 1996: Veteran called the office to reopen a claim that was denied in 1996. The Benefits Specialists, assisted a this Vietnam veteran to reopen his claim for heart disease. This is one of the 55 conditions caused by Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. An error was identified in the previous rating of 8/31/06. The veteran was **AWARDED \$540,000.00** dollars (lump sum) in a retroactive payment cash TAX FREE pament. The current on-going monthly payment would have been \$3,560 per month with multiple other benefits. This veteran was living in low-income housing struggling to make ends meet and waited over 900 days for his claim to rated. The VA processing times have become very lengthy for Agent Orange claims. Sadly, one day after receiving this payment the veteran passed from his heart condition. Fortunately, his survivors will benefit from our due diligence.



Our Impact:

Brown County veterans and their dependents have received a total disbursement of Federal VA benefits of \$135.3 million in 2022, this is an increase of \$10.4 million over 2021.

Furthermore, Compensation and Pension increased over \$3.6 million from \$61.8 million in 2021 to \$65.4 million in 2022. Retroactive cash payouts (tax free) amounted to \$7.5 million in 2022, that is increase of over \$3.5 million compared to 2021. 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 |
| \$425,920 | \$25,000,000 | 5,796% |



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 | \$3,000 |
| ▪ WI Property Tax Credit | <u>\$1,648,516</u> |
| Total State Benefits | \$1,651,516 |

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 | \$65,437,000 |
| ▪ Education & Vocational Rehabilitation | \$5,637,000 |
| ▪ Insurance & Indemnities | \$1,191,000 |
| ▪ Grave Markers & Flags | \$135,000 |
| ▪ VA Health Care | \$65,115,000 |
| ▪ Federal VA Home Loans (794 Loans) | <u>\$170,810,050</u> |
| Total Federal Benefits | \$308,325,000 |
| Total of Federal and State Combined Benefits (Increase of \$13,273,855 million over 2021) | \$309,976,566 |



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 | 374 | \$47,448,300 | \$51,112,900 | \$67,649,400 |
| Indirect Effect | 90 | \$4,848,300 | \$7,312,100 | \$13,960,400 |
| Induced Effect | <u>802</u> | <u>\$37,836,000</u> | <u>\$65,350,400</u> | <u>\$115,066,600</u> |
| Total Effect | 1,266 | \$90,132,700 | \$123,775,400 | \$196,676,500 |

State & Local Government Revenues: **\$9,177,200**

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$419,761,800.00

- 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:

“Just a note to thank you for your tireless efforts on my behalf over the past couple of years. When we first met, my file at the VA was in something less than stellar condition. After a phone conversation with you, things started to happen. You were able to get dependents added, files corrected and disability ratings to where they should have been. And, at this writing, you are still hard at it on a few remaining items. When I had gotten to the point of giving up, I would hear from you about yet another rabbit you pulled out of a hat. Tenacious would be a word for you. I apologize to and thank your family for all the hours you may have taken away from them to work on my behalf. Brown County veterans are extremely fortunate to have you as their advocate.” – A Vietnam veteran

“Now that there is no more fight left for us with the VA, I guess all the work is done. With that being said, I wanted to express my gratitude for all of you folks. It’s been a trying couple of years with all of this for not just me, but you as well. Please know, that we could not have done all of this without you! The help you have provided us with was beyond measure. At the start of this I was at a loss. It seemed I was screaming at the top of my lungs but getting nowhere. This was a personal struggle but know you have helped me work through some anger and hurt feelings based on dad’s diagnosis. Thank you all! For everything!” – A daughter of a Vietnam veteran

“I have been working with Brown County CVSO office due to my husband’s passing in January. I just want you to know that your office is so helpful, knowledgeable, and patient. You have helped me so much during this difficult time and I appreciate that. Thank you so much! – Widow of a veteran.