

2023 Annual Report

Brown County Veterans Service Office

“Connecting Veterans With Their Benefits”



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Director, Brown County Veterans Service Office:

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).

Assistant Brown County Veterans Service Officer:

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

Veterans Benefit Specialists:

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 by the VA Office of General Counsel is for the sole purpose of providing representation services to claimants. Yearly training and education requirements are required by the VA to maintain accreditation. The accreditation also allows 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, appointed in Fond du Lac County in 1932.
- The first meeting of 18 CVSO was in Fond Du Lac County on December 30, 1935.
- The WI CVSO Association was established in December 29, 1936 in Brown County WI.
- 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.**

1. **This is just one of the many stories.** This is a stressor statement from a veteran that we are using to apply for a PTSD Claim: “I WAS THE COMMANDER OF THIS UNIT. WHILE IN COMMAND I HAD MADE THE DECISION TO SEPARATE A SOLDIER FROM THE ARMY. BECAUSE OF THE ACTION I TOOK, HE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE WHICH LEFT HIM IN A BRAIN-DEAD STATE. I HAD TO CONVINCING THE FAMILY TO TAKE HIM OFF LIFE SUPPORT. IT WAS A BATTLE BETWEEN THE MOTHER AND THE WIFE OF THE SOLDIER. IT HAUNTS ME TO THIS DAY BECAUSE I FEEL SOME SORT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS SUICIDE BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE WHO ORDERED HIS SEPARATION FROM THE ARMY.” We share this to give you an insight what some suffer from due to their service and decisions they had to make.



Our Impact:

Brown County veterans and their dependents have received a total disbursement of Federal VA benefits of \$163.3 million in 2023, this is an increase of \$28.3 million over 2022.

Furthermore, Compensation and Pension increased over \$15.5 million from \$65.4 million in 2022 to \$79.9 million in 2023. Retroactive cash payouts (tax free) amounted to \$5.0 million in 2023. 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
\$407,603	\$36,278,768	8,800%



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	\$9,000
▪ WI Property Tax Credit (566)	<u>\$2,073,073</u>
Total State Benefits	\$1,651,516

In 2023 our office received a \$14,300 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 (\$15 mil. Inc.)	\$79,923,000
▪ Education & Vocational Rehabilitation	\$4,827,000
▪ Insurance & Indemnities	\$555,000
▪ Grave Markers & Flags	\$140,000
▪ VA Health Care	\$68,089,000
▪ Federal VA Home Loans (399 Loans)	<u>\$103,922,169</u>
Total Federal Benefits	\$257,456,169
Total of Federal and State Combined Benefits	\$259,529,242



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 2023 Economic Impact

Impact	Employment	Labor Income	Total Income	Industry Sales
Direct Effect	391	\$450,592,000	\$54,272,300	\$71,508,000
Indirect Effect	94	\$5,014,300	\$7,493,800	\$14,209,000
Induced Effect	<u>940</u>	<u>\$44,270,400</u>	<u>\$138,218,600</u>	<u>\$134,656,400</u>
Total Effect	1,424	\$99,876,700	\$138,218,600	\$223,373,300

State & Local Government Revenues: **\$10,451,700**

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$461,461,600.00 (\$41,706,800 INCREASE OVER 2022)

- 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

The current CVSO, Joe Aulik, started in January 2019. Under his leadership, implementing the “Skip the Trip” service model to allow veterans and family members to file VA benefits by phone along with increased community engagement and staff training, the results have been unprecedented. Following are the improved metrics:

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>
VA BENEFITS	\$182.5 million	\$259.5 million	\$77 million
COMPENSATION AND PENSION	\$50.4 million	\$79.9 million	\$29.5 million
CLAIMS FILED	1,000 per yr	1,500 per yr	500 per year
CLAIMS FILED	3.0 per day	5.7 per day	2.7 per day
PHONE CALLS IN/OUT	na	20,000 per yr 76 per day	na
EMAILS IN/OUT	na	25,000 per yr 96 per day	na

With the passage of the PACT ACT in 2022 the VA estimated over 4 million additional claims will be filed. Current backlog is 600,000.

Brown County is ranked #1 with comparable size offices and those offices are scheduling appointments two months out. With our model, we have same day/same week claim services and only schedule in-office appointments when needed. We able to process more claims faster.

The average claim load for the Brown County Veterans Service office is 900 claims pending at the VA. The office is directly responsible for managing 700 of those claims. That means over 77% of the claim work going to the VA is coming from the Brown County Veterans Service Office. The CVSO and staff average claims loads of 150 each.

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:

“Brown County has an amazing Veterans Services Office. My Dad, a Navy veteran, passed a year ago, but because I was estranged from him, I did not receive a flag. I reached out by suggestion to the Green Bay Veterans Service Office, and they got me a flag and my dad’s military records. If you know a veteran, please give them a hug, and let them know military blood runs deep. My 15-year-old daughter was crying tears of pride and happiness getting to hold her grandfather’s flag.”

“This was a thank you card sent to one of your newest members to our TEAM, Melisa Young, Veterans Benefits Specialist, who just passed six months on the job. “My spouse and I want to thank you for your help and advice with the VA disability application and filing process. You were there for us – we couldn’t have done this without you! You listened to what we had to say, and we always felt that you were looking out for our best interest. Thank you again for everything. We wish you all the best in your personal and professional life.” A happy veteran!

“This week I received my new disability rating from the VA going from 505 to 80%. My sincere appreciation for all that you did on my behalf for this to happen. I salute and thank you for all your great efforts – A Veteran.
