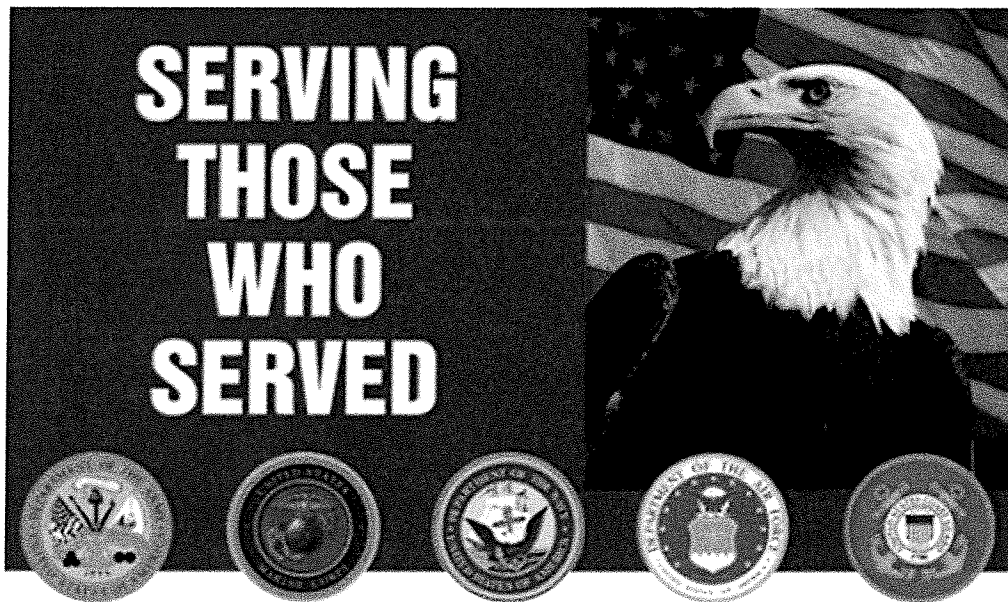


**Napa County  
Veterans Service Office  
Annual Report  
Fiscal Year 2014-2015**





A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Health & Human Services Agency  
Comprehensive Services for Older Adults  
Veterans Services

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## Year-End Summary, FY 2014-2015

### Narrative

The Napa County Veterans Service Office (NCVSO), a unit of the Comprehensive Services for Older Adults (CSOA) division within the Napa County Health and Human Services Agency, helps ensure that the veterans, their dependents and their surviving spouses receive access to all benefits to which they are entitled.

The unit consists of a full time County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO), a Veterans Services Representative and a part-time extra-help office assistant. The CVSO, Patrick Jolly, is fully accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, The Retired Enlisted Association, The Military Order of the Purple Heart and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Veterans Representative, Ryan LaBar is accredited with the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers and the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

The CVSO meets periodically with the Director and managers of the Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office in Oakland, the directors of the Northern California VA Health Care centers, the Adjutant General of the CA National Guard and the Secretary of the CA Department of Veterans Affairs to discuss policy and procedures. He is active in the California Association of County Veterans service Officers, serving on the Strategic Planning, Funding Process and Legislation Committees. He is a former President of the Association.

Napa County expended \$295,494 in direct and indirect costs for this program in FY 2014-2015. The return on investment to the veterans of Napa County, their dependents and surviving spouses was \$2.8M. This amount is the annualized total of new funds received as a direct result of claims submitted by the Napa County Veterans Service Office.

### Service Delivery Accomplishments

The CVSO filed 413 claims during this fiscal year, an average of nearly 35 per month.

- **\$1,272,907.65** in one-time retroactive and lump sum monetary payments was received by Napa County veterans and/or their families from the Department of Veterans Affairs, based on claims submitted by this office.

- **\$1,405,503.12** was received in annualized new recurring monthly benefits awarded during this reporting period. This is the amount of monthly payments from the VA for claims submitted from this office.
- **\$157,159** in California College Tuition Fee Waiver savings was granted to 51 dependent children of service-connected disabled veterans who are students of a University of California, California State University or Community College.
- During FY 2014-15 the CVSO conducted 656 in-depth client interviews. Of these, 82 were conducted at private homes, nursing homes or hospitals.

Recent State Audit results from the California Department of Veterans Affairs for reported workload activity this past year indicated a **perfect score** of no errors to reduce our state subvention for the coming year.

During this fiscal year approximately 97% of all claims submitted to the VA have ultimately resulted in at least a partial grant of benefits requested.

Napa County hired a Veterans Service Representative in May 2014. Ryan LaBar rapidly became a productive member of the team, rapidly passing the accreditation examination and becoming an accredited representative of the California Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

The Veterans Service Office in association with the Napa County Veterans Advocacy Coalition established a monthly service program called Vet Connect which began in November 2014. This program brings roughly a dozen service agencies together in one location to meet with veterans.

The NCVSO also visits The Pathway Home at Yountville monthly to provide claims counseling and assistance to the residents. The Pathway Home is a residential treatment facility for veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom who suffer from severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

## Challenges

Following the August 2014 earthquake, the Veterans Service Office was at the heart of the damage to the Carithers Building, and received over eight inches of flooding due to a burst water pipe in the overhead. This resulted in the damage or outright destruction of some client files. The office relocated along with the rest of CSOA to the South Campus, and made a permanent move to 650 Imperial Way in May 2015.

Napa County falls under the VA Medical Center San Francisco service area. VAMC San Francisco does not provide housing vouchers, home-based primary care or other services to veterans in Napa County, citing the geographic distance from VA facilities, although VAMC SF has facilities in Santa Rosa, Ukiah and Clearlake. There are no VA health facilities in

Napa County, requiring veterans to travel to Vallejo, Fairfield, Santa Rosa or San Francisco for any treatment.

## Conclusions

The Napa County Veterans Service Office has significantly impacted the economic lives and educational experience of veterans and their families as shown above. At the same time, the local economy has been enhanced each year. In addition, veterans and their dependents receive assistance with VA and Department of Defense medical care access, VA and CAL-VET home loans, burial benefits, survivor benefits, and other programs with a quantifiable monetary value, all of which contribute to the cost-effectiveness of our department.

Many tasks cannot be benchmarked, measured or quantified. Veterans' claims work involves sensitive and complex issues that are often very personal in nature, including combat and sexual trauma issues. Many clients suffer physical and mental disablement or profound bereavement. The CVSO provides a safe, thoughtful and empathetic environment in which many combat veterans first begin to face their demons.

Clients represent all ages, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Some clients are hostile and belligerent. Many are unable to express their needs, or are so completely intimidated by the challenges inherent in presenting a claim to the Federal government that they are nearly immobile – they've shut down and count on the CVSO to become their advocate. We endeavor to be alert, sensitive and compassionate to the needs and concerns of our clients.

Many clients are seeking benefits due to advancing age, medical issues or economic hardships. We strive to ensure their dignity through a difficult and often embarrassing process.

There is one other factor that cannot be measured but is truly priceless: Our constituency's knowledge that we "are there for them". We strive to show them in everything we do and say that we value them, and the service they gave to their community and their country.

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*"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man is entitled, and less than that no man shall have."* Theodore Roosevelt

*"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."* George Washington

*"How do you quantify the look on a veterans face when finding that instead of abject poverty, the outlook of his or her life has been improved by the efforts of you or your staff?"* – Rod Barton, CVSO, El Dorado County