

# 2016 Annual Report



Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County  
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Client Home Visit & Educational Outreach Available by Appointment



# VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF MCHENRY COUNTY

2200 North Seminary Avenue  
Woodstock, IL 60098

Phone (815) 334-4229 Fax (815) 334-4678 e-mail MAIwanic@co.mchenry.il.us



Michael A. Iwanicki  
CVSO  
Superintendent

February 15, 2016

The Honorable Bruce Rauner  
Governor of Illinois  
State Capital Room 207  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Rauner,

As required by 330 ILCS 45 (The Military Veterans Assistance Act) I am submitting the Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County Annual Report for the Fiscal Year ending November 30, 2015.

## **Routine Functions of the VAC of McHenry County**

- **Client Review:** Provide a complete review of every case for any additional programs or benefits to which the applicant may be entitled. This includes working closely with other agencies to ensure that clients receive the tools needed to become or remain independent.
- **Veterans Financial Assistance:** Veterans Assistance is available to eligible low income veterans. Assistance is paid directly to vendors for Rent or Mortgage, Utilities, Food, and Gasoline. Emergency Veterans Assistance is available to eligible veterans who are not eligible for Veterans Assistance and in need of a onetime assistance for arrears housing, heat, or electric.
- **VA Claims Prosecution:** The Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) for the VAC of McHenry County are recognized by the VA General Council to represent veterans and/or eligible dependents all the way to the VA Board of Appeals. We assist our veterans with Disability, Pension (Aid & Attendance), Special Monthly Compensation, and VA Healthcare claims.
- **VA Hospital Transportation:** Through the operation of four vehicles the Commission provides free transportation services for veterans and their aide to the Capt. James Lovell Federal Health Care Center (Lovell FHCC). Veterans meet the bus at designated stops in Woodstock, McHenry, and Crystal Lake.
- **Other Advocacy Work:** The VAC of McHenry County continues to educate Local, State, and Federal officials and legislators to support resolutions and legislation that positively impacts the veterans' community. Additionally, the VAC works with numerous local agencies in order to match client needs with the appropriate services.

**Summary of 2016 Highlights** – McHenry County Taxpayers can be proud in the care and respect of how their money is being used. Our top notch staff filled over 3500 transportation requests to the Lovell FHCC, addressed 279 requests for financial assistance, and began prosecution of over 350 new VA claims. Thanks to an exemplary team, for every \$1 spent, the VAC has assisted veterans and surviving spouses receive \$6.72 in new payments from the VA. Most of this money is statistically spent locally on goods and services. Thanks to a positive relationship with the VA Regional Office (VARO) in Chicago, the VAC of McHenry County received more comprehensive access to VARO based programs such as VBMS. This has provided our clients with up to date information on how their claims are progressing through the VA system.

VA Claims prosecuted by the VAC over 2016 resulted in just under \$3.0M in new claims dollars reaching the pockets of our Veterans. The present value of successful VA claims development and prosecution from 2013 through 2016 resulted in over \$9.0 million in VA Disability and Pension cash benefits to our Veterans and their families over 2016. This figure does not include other benefits such as VA Health Insurance (CHAMP VA) for dependents, Veteran and/or Dependent Education Benefits, or Vocational Rehabilitation

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

The State of Illinois experienced an average 0.39% increase in VA compensation and pension dollars in 2015 over 2014. This was below the national average of 0.69% and placed Illinois in the first deviation below mean (ranking 16 out of 53 regarding improvement). I believe inconsistency of effort throughout the State, and large service deserts particularly in Cook County and many counties below I-80 leave many veterans uninformed and underserved. Based on the figures published by the VA and tracked by our office, the VAC of McHenry County accounted for a majority of the awards successfully prosecuted in the County over 2015. Efforts to aggressively advocate on behalf of our veterans help McHenry County exceed both the State and National average increase in VA compensation and pension dollars (State up .39% National up .69% McHenry County up 5.39%).

A Veterans Resource Fair and Stand Down was held in April 2016 which was organized by the VAC, TLS Veterans, the McHenry County Housing Authority, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Funding for the Stand-Down was provided by the VAC Inc. Numerous agencies including the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and members of the Continuum of Care provided information and services to over 70 veterans. At least three of those veterans found employment at the Job Fair section of the event which was held on a separate date.

The VAC Inc, Student Veterans of America (SVA), and TLS Veterans working with Mike Splitt of In-Sync Systems organized McHenry County's second annual Patriot Run 5K in support of local veterans programs. Over \$25,000 was raised to support veterans' programs within McHenry County.

The VAC provides transportation to the Lovell Federal Health Care Center. Of the 3,554 transportation appointments filled by the VAC over 2016, approximately 91.9% were for veterans aged 55 and older. Senior Care Volunteer Network and Senior Service Associates volunteers provided door to door transportation to and from the designated VAC Bus stops for veterans who can't drive. Volunteer drivers logged over 10,000 miles.

The total amount of Veterans Financial Assistance Granted continues to decrease. It is believed that this is resulting from the combination of successful VA claims prosecution, Federal Assistance Programs, and decrease in population. The VA's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) alone placed around 19 formally homeless McHenry County veterans into permanent housing.

Our Outreach Education Program proactively reaches veterans and their families through a variety of venues. This past year the VAC provided Educational Outreach at numerous locations including;

VFW – Crystal Lake	VFS Food Distribution	Human Services Advocates
Alden/Hebron Elementary School	VA Town Hall McHenry County College	Illinois Association of County Assessor's
BSA Blackhawk Council	Leadership Greater McHenry County	IDES Job Fair
McHenry County Fair	McHenry County Senior Fair	Woodstock Library
McHenry Senior Services	Senior Vets Group Crystal Lake	Marine Corps League - District
VA Town Hall Lovell FHCC	Marengo Library	Woodstock Rotary
Harvard Diggins Library	Student Veterans of America – MCC	People in Need Forum

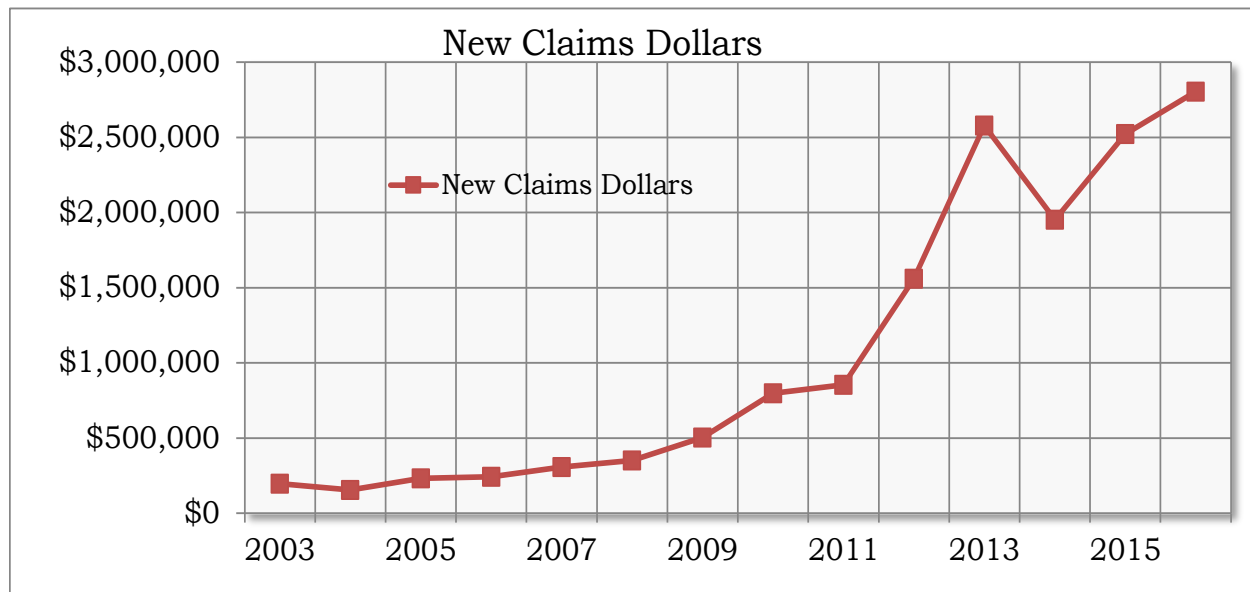
The members of the Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County are proud to be serving our military veterans and their families. Working with the Federal, State, and local public and private agencies McHenry County Veterans can expect quality service and assistance valuable to maintaining or reaching independence.

Very Respectfully,

Michael A. Iwanicki  
Superintendent / CVSO

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County FY 2016 Annual Report

## US Department of Veterans Affairs VA Claims Prosecution



Back in 2004 the VAC Executive Board agreed that greater emphasis needed to be placed on assisting our veterans and surviving family members with presenting and prosecuting Disability & Pension Claims before the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Although helpful, local Veterans Assistance (financial support) was not sufficient to assist our clients with becoming as independent as possible. The goal was for McHenry County to be within the top 10 counties in Illinois for receipt of VA Disability and Pension dollars awarded to its veterans and surviving family members within 10 years (in 2003 McHenry County ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the State). The goal of becoming one of the top 10 counties in the State for VA Disability and Pension was reached by the end of 2010, three years ahead of goal. At the end of 2015 McHenry County ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the State, right behind Kane County. Not illustrated is the cumulative impact of claims awards. The VA provides monthly benefit checks to those awarded Service Connected Disability or Pension. The 2016 impact from claims successfully prosecuted from FY2013 thru FY 2016 (actual cash in the McHenry County Clients pocket) is estimated at just under \$9.1 Million. Figures from the VA for 2016 are expected by April 2017.

Also not illustrated are the additional benefits granted veterans rated 10% or more who become eligible for VA Health Care at no charge and medications for \$8 for 30 days per prescription. Veterans granted 50% or more pay nothing for their VA Health Care or prescriptions, and those granted 100% are eligible for a health insurance policy for their dependents.

Veterans rated 30% or greater are eligible for specialized vocational training or education based on their individual's ability to work. Dependents of veterans rated 100% are eligible for their education to be paid by the VA. The State of Illinois also passed legislation which provides an incentive to stay in Illinois by providing a property tax exemption up to eliminating property tax for our most disabled veterans.

Veterans Service Officers who are certified by military service organizations and accredited by the US Department of Veterans Affairs General Council may be granted remote access to veterans files at the Veterans Benefits Administration. VSO's with the VAC of McHenry County were among the first to receive this coveted remote access in the state of Illinois. The accreditation and-

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

remote access does come with responsibility to safeguard veterans' information, and to ensure that every applicant receives the best possible service. To earn certification by the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers the VSO must complete a 32 hour certification class and pass an examination. To be recognized by other Military Service Organizations such as the VFW or American Legion, the VSO must successfully complete the VA's TRIP training which familiarizes the VSO with the VA's remote access programs. The VA requires and provides annual security training of all VSO's granted access to the Veterans Benefits System. Since our accredited VSO's are barred from discriminating an applicant's request for assistance with a claim based on where the applicant lives. The following information provides a breakdown of the FY 2016 claims that have been presented / awarded based on the location of the applicants home.

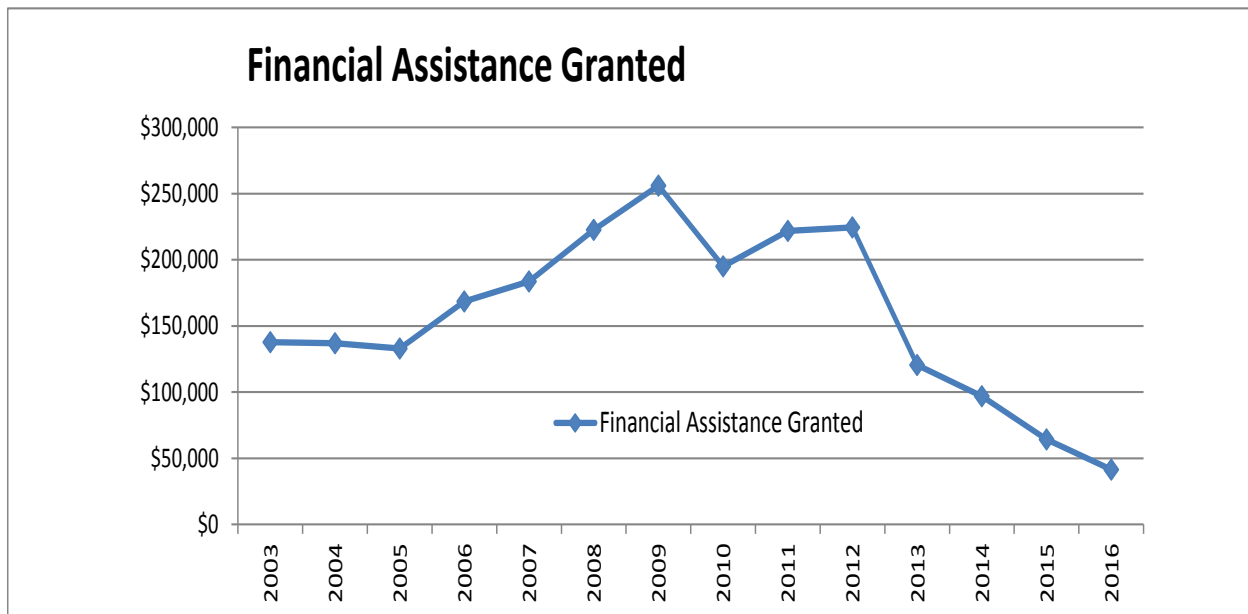
Townships	Claims total	Awards		"Other" Awards	
Alden	1	\$5,450.28	Out of County	Boone	\$0.00
Algonquin	62	\$407,514.93		Cook	\$67,157.95
Burton	2	\$4,195.21		Iroquois	\$24,235.87
Chemung	10	\$24,594.44		Kane	\$91,722.60
Coral	3	\$21,713.16		Lake	\$364,437.07
Dorr	43	\$337,104.21		Ogle	\$36,492.60
Dunham	1	\$16,899.96		Winnebago	\$11,330.09
Grafton	27	\$168,155.10	Out of State	Califorina	\$12,193.56
Greenwood	14	\$72,016.24		Florida	\$0.00
Hartland	2	\$5,915.58		Georgia	\$0.00
Hebron	4	\$23,526.72		Indiana	\$18,430.06
Marengo	7	\$151,753.24		Montana	\$0.00
McHenry	61	\$756,441.09		Tennessee	\$36,766.80
Nunda	31	\$210,620.64		Texas	\$0.00
Richmond	8	\$77,175.41		Wisconsin	\$0.00
Riley	1	\$0.00	Out of Country	France	\$0.00
Seneca	4	\$2,038.75		Japan	\$0.00
Other	71	\$662,766.60		Phillipines	\$0.00
Blank	0	\$0.00	Total "Other"		\$662,766.60
	352	\$2,947,881.56			
Total McHenry County		\$2,285,114.96			

We strongly believe that the need for accredited Veterans Service Officers will continue well into the future. 40 plus years after the Vietnam War chronic conditions related to chemical exposures continue to be identified. In 2008 it was learned that ANY Service Member or Veteran who actively served 90 days or more is at a greater risk of developing ALS than the non-veteran population, the risk is double for those who served in the Middle East. More recently, long term contamination to the water at Camp Lejeune was found to have caused a number of cancers in not just the Marines stationed there, but the families housed there as well. As more is learned about the impact of the current war on our service members it is expected that the VA will add conditions to the growing list of ailments associated with serving in the Gulf.

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County FY 2016 Annual Report

## Veterans Assistance & Emergency Assistance

Veterans Assistance is mandated per 330 ILCS 45 the Military Veterans Assistance Act. There is a question as to the meaning of “Emergency Assistance”, however, it has been our opinion that Emergency Assistance within the Military Veterans Assistance Act (hereafter referred to as the “Act”) has the exact same meaning as laws describing Township Emergency Assistance public aid. As such, since the Act describes Veterans Assistance (similar to General Assistance) AND Emergency Assistance it is believed that the Act is instructing VAC’s to have both. The Townships MAY offer Emergency Assistance. Further, within the Townships General Assistance Guidelines the Township Administrator of General Assistance “shall” refer military veterans to the Veterans Assistance Commission if the County has one.



The above chart represents the total amount of Veterans Assistance & Emergency Assistance granted each year from 2003 through 2016. Over 2016 financial assistance was granted as follows:

	Food		Housing		Utility Totals		Independent Living		Gasoline		Denials	Grand Totals	
	Number	Total \$	Number	Total \$	Number	Total \$	Number	Total \$	Number	Total \$		Requests	Total \$
December	10	\$250.00	6	\$2,443.04	7	\$464.79	1	\$250.00	0	\$0.00	3	27	\$3,407.83
January	9	\$225.00	2	\$468.88	12	\$1,274.16	1	\$250.00	1	\$38.08	2	27	\$2,256.12
February	4	\$100.00	4	\$2,146.84	6	\$1,481.39	3	\$860.00	0	\$0.00	0	17	\$4,588.23
March	6	\$150.00	2	\$1,539.00	10	\$1,046.43	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	2	20	\$2,735.43
April	2	\$50.00	1	\$67.67	9	\$3,047.41	3	\$860.00	0	\$0.00	0	15	\$4,025.08
May	7	\$175.00	4	\$1,615.41	5	\$736.03	1	\$250.00	0	\$0.00	6	23	\$2,776.44
June	12	\$300.00	5	\$840.07	12	\$1,308.23	2	\$720.00	1	\$38.02	4	36	\$3,206.32
July	7	\$175.00	2	\$1,163.26	4	\$618.95	1	\$250.00	2	\$75.13	3	19	\$2,282.34
August	7	\$175.00	3	\$1,627.00	7	\$700.36	2	\$720.00	2	\$76.15	4	25	\$3,298.51
September	6	\$150.00	4	\$2,017.67	15	\$2,540.91	0	\$0.00	1	\$38.07	2	28	\$4,746.65
October	6	\$150.00	1	\$404.00	11	\$914.35	0	\$0.00	1	\$38.06	2	21	\$1,506.41
November	2	\$50.00	8	\$4,458.17	4	\$119.23	0	\$0.00	2	\$76.11	5	21	\$4,703.51
Total	78	\$1,950.00	42	\$18,791.01	102	\$14,252.24	14	\$4,160.00	10	\$379.62	33	279	\$39,532.87
% of Total	27.96%	4.93%	15.05%	47.53%	36.56%	36.05%	5.02%	10.52%	3.58%	0.96%	11.83%		

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

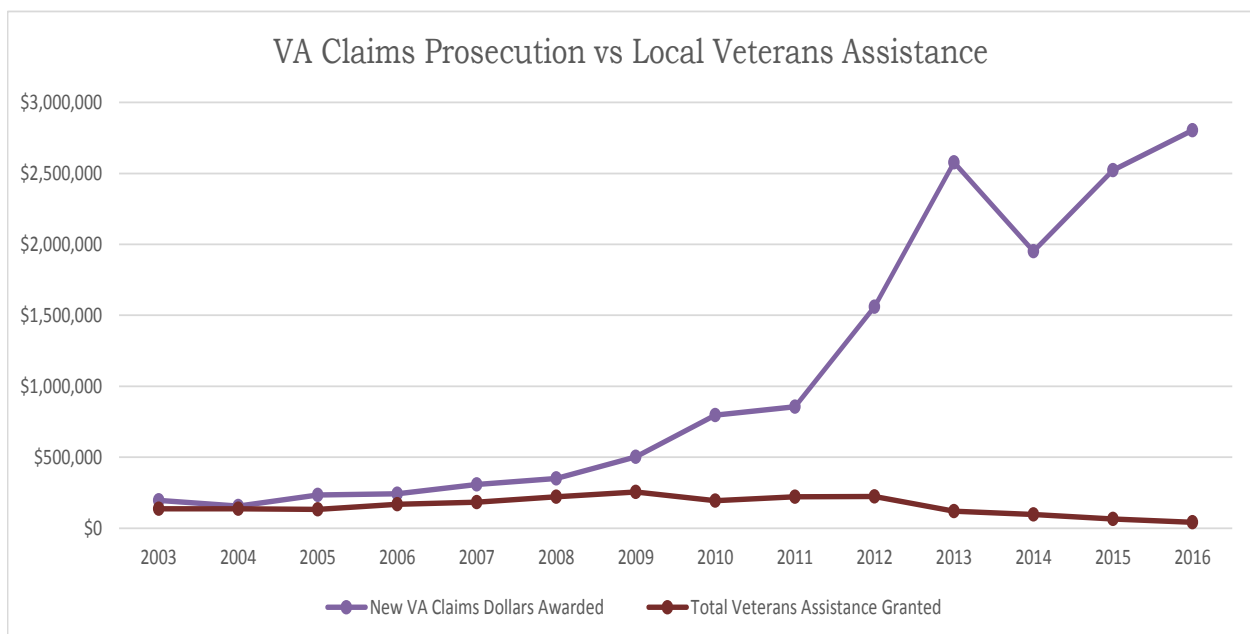
Assistance is granted based on a written set of guidelines approved by the Commission. Over 2015 the States Attorney's Office also reviewed our guidelines and made recommendations for clarification and justification. The recommendations were included in the biannual complete review of the guidelines. The next review will be done over FY 2017.

Veterans Assistance is provided to eligible veterans or eligible surviving spouses based on income and need. The applicant must provide documentation showing all sources of income and current expenses. An applicant who had previously been provided a referral to another agency (such as Workforce Network) must provide proof of working with the agency prior to granting further assistance. Veterans Assistance may be granted month to month (30 day cycle) as long as the applicant can show eligibility for each eligibility period. Over 2016 the Commission approved a change to increase the income guideline from 135% of the HHS Poverty Level to 150%. A second change approved will allow temporary housing assistance for those seeking an apartment after being approved for HUD / VASH (the VA's Supportive Housing Program).

Emergency Assistance as described in the Public Aid Code may be granted to applicants NOT eligible for General Assistance. For our purpose the applicant must not be eligible for Veterans Assistance and must meet written eligibility guidelines. Veterans Emergency Assistance may only be used for Utilities or Housing. Emergency Veterans Assistance may only be granted one time over a 24 month period.

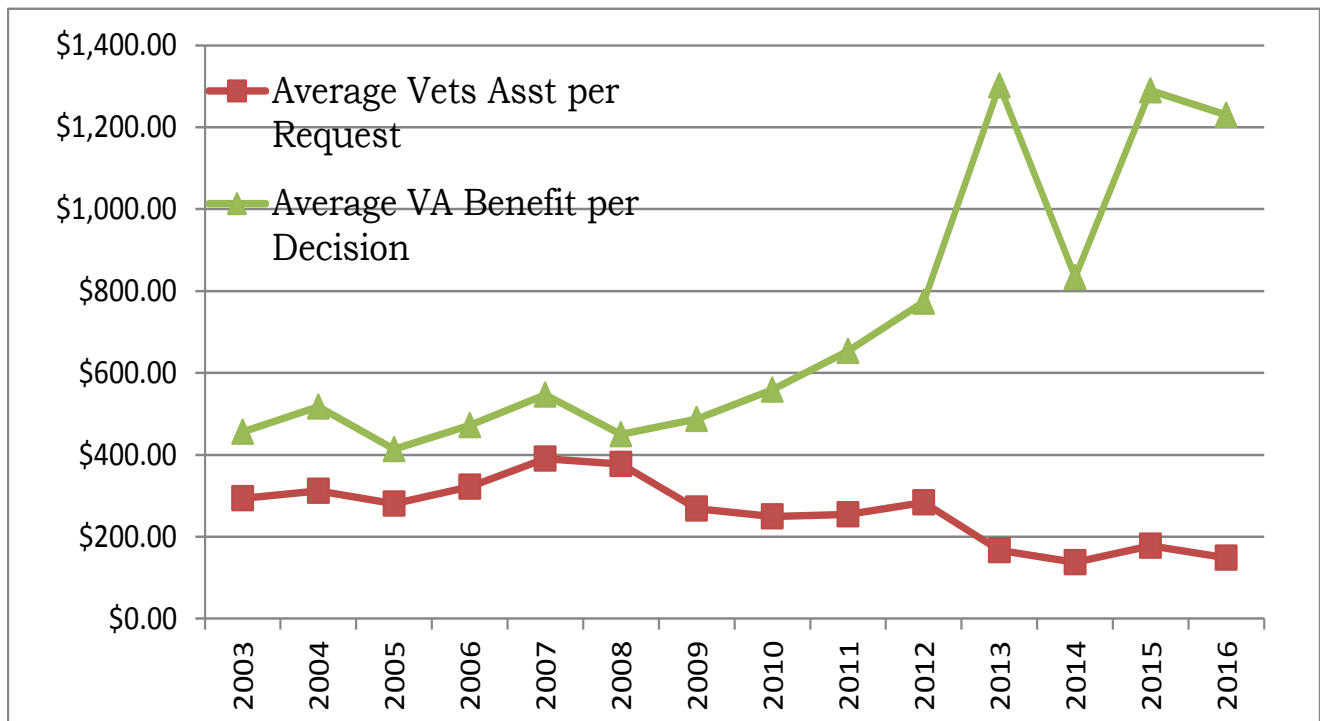
Disaster Veterans Assistance is granted in coordination with other emergency assistance from qualified agencies when, through no fault of the applicant, an applicant's home is severely damaged or destroyed. It is treated as Veterans Assistance however, no income information is used to determine eligibility. As with other Assistance, no monies go to the applicant only to the vendor. Disaster Veterans Assistance may only be granted once in a lifetime.

Since 2012 there has been a considerable drop in the amount of local Veterans Financial Assistance Granted. We believe this is a result of success with the presentation and prosecution of VA Claims which provide the applicant with cash benefits from the VA. Below is a graph showing the relationship between Total VA Claims Awarded and Total Veterans Assistance Granted:



# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County FY 2016 Annual Report

Veterans Assistance and Emergency Assistance is a very helpful tool to assist low income veterans or their surviving spouses when other options are not available. All too often it means the difference between being housed and being homeless. For veterans and service members who have developed chronic conditions as a result of military service Veterans Assistance assists the family throughout the VA Claim process. If the VA awards the claim, in most cases the family no longer requires local Veterans Assistance. Below shows the difference between monthly Local Veterans Assistance and VA Disability / Pension cash benefit per month.



## Other Services

The VAC is a member of the Continuum of Care and maintains relationships with many of the local government and social service agencies. When a VSO interviews a client the goal is not only to address the immediate need of the veteran, but also identify needs of the family. Where the VA can provide wonderful health care services to the veteran, the VA is not typically available to assist family members or provide services outside of health care. Part of being an advocate for the veteran or surviving spouse is identifying other services that can help. In addition to the VA, the VAC has also provided referral counseling numerous local agencies and service groups including:

McHenry County Housing Authority	Joe's Wish	IL Dept of Veterans Affairs
American Legion Family Assistance	TLS Veterans	Consumer Credit Counseling
Public Action to Deliver Shelter - PADS	Senior Services	McHenry County College
Senior Care Volunteer Network	Elderwerks	Mental Health Board
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	Family Alliance	Local Posts
Small Business Development Center	McRide & Pace	Townships, & Church's



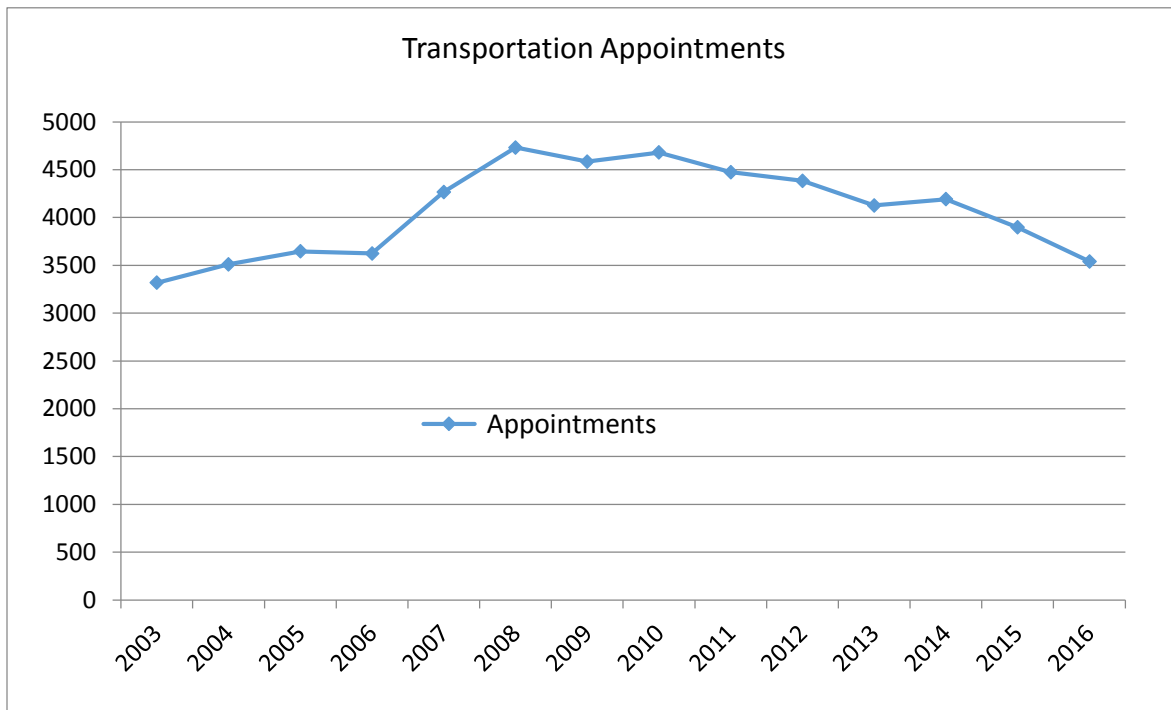
# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County FY 2016 Annual Report

## VA Hospital Transportation Service

The Commission has been providing some form of transportation service to the hospital in North Chicago since we opened the doors in December 1989. Initially, volunteer drivers were reimbursed for mileage. Eventually the Commission organized a fundraiser to purchase a van to transport passengers the North Chicago VA Medical Center. After the purchase a driver was hired on a per-diem basis and transportation was provided up to 5 days a week with special days to take patients to Milwaukee VA, Madison VA, or Hines VA.

In 2008 AMVETS completed a grant application for the benefit of the VAC and its transportation clients which provided a new minivan. With increasing ridership another vehicle was added and two drivers were hired as full time with one per-diem. This continued until 2009 when the cost of the program became prohibitive and the program started to be restructured. We now have up to 5 per-diem drivers for four vehicles and can provide service to the Lovell FHCC for morning and afternoon appointments at a current cost lower than what was in 2009 (~\$109K for morning service only to \$81.7 over 2016). The Office has three Pace Lease handicap assessable vehicles, two are 13 passenger Champion Bus's and one maxi-van. The fourth vehicle is a low floor wheelchair access minivan obtained through AMVETS using the Illinois Veterans Lottery Grant program.

Over the past couple years we have seen a drop in the number of passengers transported. This could be due to added services at the VA's Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in McHenry and greater availability of local rehab services covered by VA Health Care. In late 2015 the VAC began looking to identify possible changes to the VAC transportation service. We are examining the possibility of providing shuttle service for limited mobility clients using the CBOC and additional service for clients using local Kidney Dialysis. A decision will be made in early 2017.

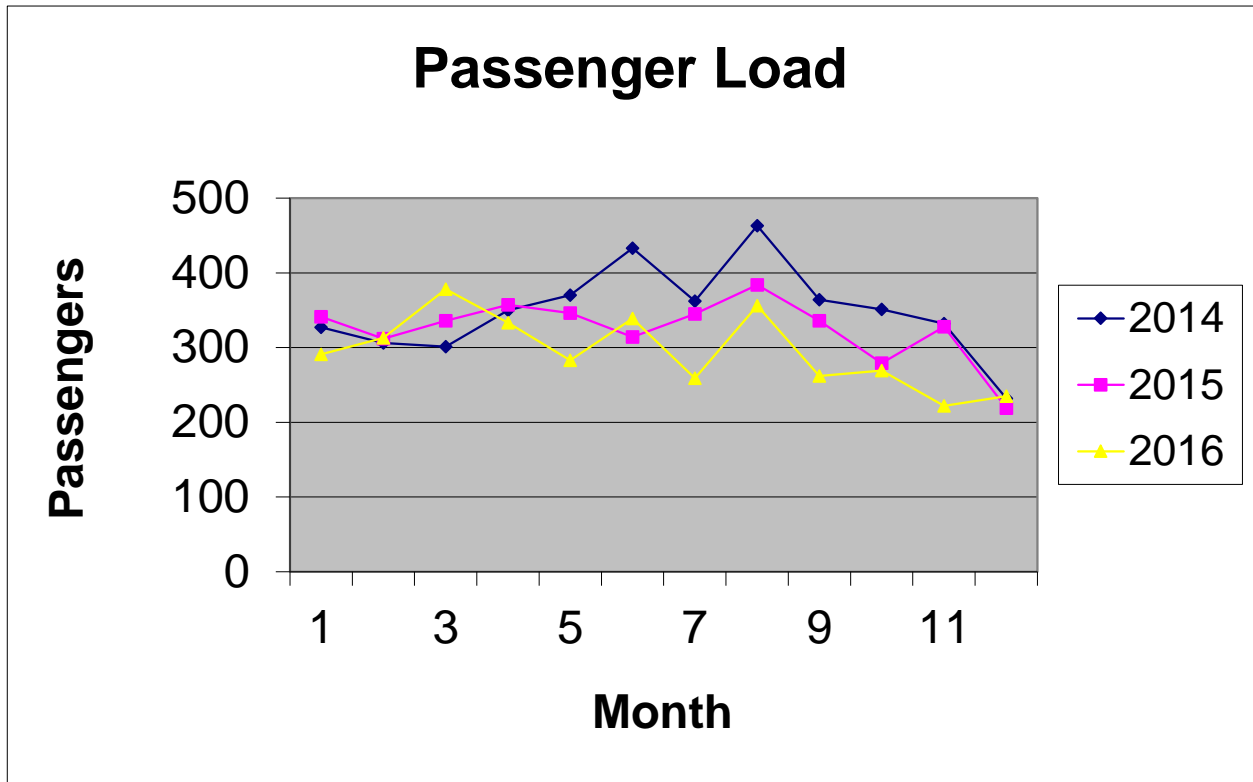


# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

The below chart shows recent changes in transportation month to month. Not included in the total are the 14 transportation appointments to the CBOC in McHenry for clients unable to drive.

Month	2014	2015	%Change 2014	Ave. % Change	2016	%Change 2015	Ave. % Change
December	327	341	4.3%	4.3%	291	-14.7%	-14.7%
January	306	312	2.0%	3.2%	313	0.3%	-7.5%
February	301	336	11.6%	5.9%	378	12.5%	-0.7%
March	350	357	2.0%	4.8%	333	-6.7%	-2.3%
April	370	346	-6.5%	2.3%	283	-18.2%	-5.6%
May	433	314	-27.5%	-3.9%	339	8.0%	-3.4%
June	362	345	-4.7%	-4.0%	259	-24.9%	-6.6%
July	463	384	-17.1%	-6.1%	356	-7.3%	-6.7%
August	364	336	-7.7%	-6.3%	262	-22.0%	-8.4%
September	351	279	-20.5%	-7.6%	269	-3.6%	-8.0%
October	332	328	-1.2%	-7.1%	222	-32.3%	-10.1%
November	232	219	-5.6%	-7.0%	235	7.3%	-9.2%
Passengers	4191	3897			3540		
Equal Time	4191	3897			3540		
Percent Capacity	59.3%	55.1%	Goal <70%		50.1%		
Percent Change		-7.02%			-9.16%		



# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

### Out in the Community

Over the past fiscal year representatives from the VAC provided Educational Outreach to groups throughout the community. The purpose is to provide basic information about benefits available to eligible veterans / service members and their family. Over 2016 the VAC of McHenry County provided Educational Outreach to:

VFW – Crystal Lake IL	VFS Food Distribution	Human Services Advocates
Alden/Hebron Elementary School	VA Town Hall Lovell FHCC	People In Need Forum
BSA Blackhawk Council	Leadership Greater McHenry County	IDES Job Fair
McHenry County Fair	McHenry County Senior Fair	Woodstock Library
McHenry Senior Services	Senior Vets Group Crystal Lake	Marine Corps League - District
VA Town Hall McHenry County College	Marengo Library	Woodstock Rotary
Harvard Diggins Library	Student Veterans of America – MCC	Illinois Association of County Assessor's

In 2014 the VAC organized its first Veterans Stand Down which was hosted by the VFW Post in Woodstock. Planning the event with other local agencies, the goal was to have an event that would be able to address immediate needs such as emergency housing and food. With funding from the Department of Labor the January Stand Down went well, however, the VAC and the steering committee believed that restrictions imposed by the DOL hindered our ability to reach and make service available to a larger population of our local veterans and service members. The 2015 “Veterans Resource Fair” was funded by the VAC Inc. with public donations and sought more effectively reach the general veterans population. By opening the Fair up to all veterans and those with an interest in veterans concerns the steering committee believes that our Veterans Resource Fair is more in line with the intent of a Stand Down which would be and emphasis on service rather than “stuff”.

April of 2016 The VAC along with the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the McHenry County Housing Authority, US Department of Veterans Affairs, and TLS Veterans organized and hosted the 3rd Veterans / Service Members Resource Fair, and a Hiring event. The Resource Fair was held on Thursday April 28<sup>th</sup> at the VFW Post in McHenry Illinois, and the Hiring Event was held on May 12<sup>th</sup> at the McHenry County Government Center. 76 veterans and interested family members were introduced to 26 local agencies and 10 employers. Agencies included the VA, Public Health, Utility Companies, Social Services, and education. Two of our veterans were given job offers on the day of the hiring event.

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

### Who We Are

**VAC Chairman Joseph Kersten** – Joe was inducted into the US Army on 20 January 1969. After training he served in the 213<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment in Vietnam from June 1969 thru August 1970 before being Honorably discharged. Mr. Kersten served as the Commission's first Chairman which he served for 10 years. Joe reengaged with the Commission in 2008 and has served as the Chairman since 2010.

**Superintendent Michael Iwanicki** – Michael joined the US Navy in September 1980 and became an Electricians Mate. Mike served aboard the USS Elliot DD-967 which participated in the investigation of the 1983 Soviet downing of KAL-007. Michael earned the rate of EM1(SW), and was Honorably discharged from the Navy in 1986. Mr. Iwanicki was hired by the Commission in 1998 as a Veterans Service Officer and was selected as the Superintendent in 2003.

**Veterans Service Officer II Jane Dorfner** – Jane is the spouse of a US Navy veteran. She joined the VAC in 2008 and served as the Administrative Specialist before becoming a Veterans Service Officer in 2010. Jane was promoted to the Lead Service Officer in 2015 and manages the claims flow, training of new VSO's, assists the Superintendent with Outreach Education, and coordinates with various agencies during the holidays to provide food and gifts to local veteran families in need. Mrs. Dorfner represents the VAC as a member of the Continuum of Care, the Lovell FHCC Patient Advisory Council, Task Force on Aging, and the Emergency Food & Shelter Program.

**Veterans Service Officer I Matthew Fetrow** – Matthew Fetrow is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps who served from 2009-2013 with one tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2011. He served as an Aviation Supply Specialist with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 31 in Beaufort, SC for his entire enlistment. Upon honorably separating from Active Duty in January of 2013; Matthew started working with the Veterans Assistance Commission. Matthew has prosecuted 286 claims resulting in \$2,829,494.30 total claims dollars awarded to veterans and their dependents. He is presently in the first year of his master's program and intends to graduate in May of 2018 with his Master of Social Work and Master of Business Administration.

**Veterans Service Officer I Sonia Castaneda** – Sonia Castaneda has served in the U.S. Army National Guard for 10 years as a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist. During 2008-2009 Sonia was activated along with her unit to assist with Security Forces for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Sonia currently holds the rank of Staff Sergeant and continues to be in the Illinois Army National Guard. Sonia holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration and is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Social Work through Aurora University. Hired by the VAC in 2014, Sonia is the liaison between the 22<sup>nd</sup> Circuit and the VAC. Working with the VA Judicial Outreach, Sonia teamed up with Prairie State Legal Services to provide a Veterans Legal Clinic in McHenry County. Mrs. Castaneda also serves as a representative to the NACVSO Women Veteran Representative Committee.

**Office Clerk / Dispatcher James Koch** – James Koch served Honorably in the US Navy Veteran, from 1965 to 1968 at US Naval Air Station Twin Cities in Minneapolis, MN. Jim worked thirty four years at Centel and Sprint/Centel in various positions in the telephone industry and retired from Sprint in 2002. James came to the VAC in 2008 as a Transportation Specialist transporting Veterans to and from the James A. Lovell FHCC in North Chicago. Mr. Koch started in the office as the VAC's Clerk / Dispatcher in 2010.

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

**Transportation Specialist Dave Ayers** – Dave is a veteran of the US Marine Corps serving from 1956 – 1958 as a small arms specialist. After the military Dave worked as a Commercial Truck Driver until his retirement. He joined the VAC in 2004 as a Transportation Specialist.

**Transportation Specialist Roy Allsup** – Roy is an honorably discharged veteran of the US Marine Corps (1968-1970) where he served in artillery and was in country Vietnam from 1968-1969. After the military Roy was self-employed in the flooring industry until his retirement. Mr. Allsup joined the VAC as a Transportation Specialist in 2009.

**Transportation Specialist Ron Nickels** – Ron Nickels served honorably in the US Navy from 1955 – 1958 as a Communications Technician at Skag Island CA. Ron worked in McHenry County for 40+ years as a Tool & Die Mold Maker. Mr. Nickels joined the VAC as a Transportation Specialist in 2008.

**Transportation Specialist Frank Guignon** – Frank served honorably in the US Army from 1967 – 1971 as a radio and tape player repairman. He also served in country Vietnam from 1967 – 1968. After the military Frank worked as a Telecommunications Sales Engineer until his retirement. Mr. Guignon joined the commission as a Transportation Specialist in 2016.

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

### VAC Claims Performance 2015

VA EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2014							VA EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2015							2014-2015			
Expenditures in \$000							Expenditures in \$000							Total C&P			
COUNTY	vp#	Veteran Population	Comp & Pension	Ave C&P Per Vet	Ave#		COUNTY	vp#	Veteran Population	Comp & Pension	Ave C&P Per Vet	Ave#	%#	%Change	%#	%Change	
BOONE	32	3,687	46 \$ 5,843	\$ 1,585.00	97		BOONE	32	3,663	45 \$ 6,285	\$ 1,715.71	98	10	7.56%	10	8.25%	
CARROLL	63	1,448	82 \$ 2,787	\$ 1,925.31	83		CARROLL	63	1,419	79 \$ 2,922	\$ 2,058.23	81	14	4.81%	13	6.90%	
CHAMPAIGN	15	10,666	13 \$ 25,902	\$ 2,428.51	51		CHAMPAIGN	15	10,471	13 \$ 25,071	\$ 2,394.31	55	73	-3.21%	73	-1.41%	
COOK	1	199,966	1 \$ 448,330	\$ 2,242.04	62		COOK	1	192,445	1 \$ 446,088	\$ 2,318.00	62	52	-0.50%	30	3.39%	
DEKALB	20	6,953	25 \$ 12,510	\$ 1,799.12	94		DEKALB	20	6,941	24 \$ 12,647	\$ 1,822.14	94	41	1.09%	52	1.28%	
DOUGLAS	67	1,405	77 \$ 3,102	\$ 2,207.47	64		DOUGLAS	69	1,371	73 \$ 3,112	\$ 2,270.82	65	49	0.34%	39	2.87%	
DU PAGE	2	40,604	4 \$ 74,785	\$ 1,841.84	91		DU PAGE	2	39,021	5 \$ 73,291	\$ 1,878.23	91	66	-2.00%	48	1.98%	
EFFINGHAM	48	2,512	45 \$ 6,344	\$ 2,525.37	41		EFFINGHAM	49	2,455	46 \$ 6,065	\$ 2,470.98	50	83	-4.40%	78	-2.15%	
FULTON	38	3,181	42 \$ 6,686	\$ 2,101.62	72		FULTON	39	3,116	42 \$ 6,911	\$ 2,217.98	70	22	3.36%	20	5.54%	
GREENE	75	1,277	76 \$ 3,138	\$ 2,457.48	48		GREENE	75	1,258	71 \$ 3,196	\$ 2,540.67	43	34	1.83%	31	3.39%	
GRUNDY	33	3,541	41 \$ 7,080	\$ 1,999.45	80		GRUNDY	33	3,547	40 \$ 7,252	\$ 2,044.50	83	30	2.43%	45	2.25%	
HANCOCK	61	1,536	57 \$ 4,638	\$ 3,019.48	25		HANCOCK	61	1,493	58 \$ 4,419	\$ 2,960.26	24	84	-4.72%	77	-1.96%	
HENDERSON	88	765	95 \$ 1,392	\$ 1,820.18	92		HENDERSON	88	756	90 \$ 2,150	\$ 2,841.91	29	1	54.41%	1	56.13%	
HENRY	29	4,187	33 \$ 8,779	\$ 2,096.60	73		HENRY	29	4,132	33 \$ 9,233	\$ 2,234.58	69	13	5.16%	14	6.58%	
IROUOIS	51	2,203	52 \$ 5,288	\$ 2,400.11	55		IROUOIS	52	2,146	53 \$ 5,018	\$ 2,338.37	60	85	-5.11%	81	-2.57%	
JERSEY	52	2,193	58 \$ 4,552	\$ 2,076.35	74		JERSEY	51	2,177	55 \$ 4,568	\$ 2,097.85	78	50	0.33%	54	1.04%	
KANE	7	24,787	8 \$ 37,339	\$ 1,506.41	100		KANE	7	24,436	8 \$ 38,971	\$ 1,594.79	100	16	4.37%	18	5.87%	
KANKAKEE	18	8,053	20 \$ 19,000	\$ 2,359.50	58		KANKAKEE	18	7,938	20 \$ 19,136	\$ 2,410.63	53	45	0.71%	46	2.17%	
KENDALL	19	7,382	27 \$ 11,480	\$ 1,555.03	98		KENDALL	19	7,524	27 \$ 11,698	\$ 1,554.66	101	33	1.90%	62	-0.02%	
KNOX	26	4,450	29 \$ 10,473	\$ 2,353.67	59		KNOX	26	4,339	28 \$ 10,739	\$ 2,475.22	49	29	2.54%	25	5.49%	
LA SALLE	17	8,970	16 \$ 22,313	\$ 2,487.59	44		LA SALLE	17	8,813	15 \$ 22,647	\$ 2,569.80	41	36	1.50%	34	3.30%	
LAKE	4	35,395	3 \$ 92,023	\$ 2,599.87	38		LAKE	4	34,759	3 \$ 93,294	\$ 2,684.00	37	37	1.38%	37	3.24%	
LEE	45	2,782	51 \$ 5,428	\$ 1,951.02	82		LEE	45	2,738	47 \$ 5,993	\$ 2,188.70	71	9	10.39%	9	12.18%	
LIVINGSTON	44	2,803	48 \$ 5,683	\$ 2,027.65	79		LIVINGSTON	44	2,744	44 \$ 6,422	\$ 2,340.32	59	3	12.99%	3	15.42%	
MACON	16	9,244	17 \$ 22,312	\$ 2,413.74	54		MACON	16	9,004	16 \$ 22,458	\$ 2,494.09	47	46	0.65%	33	3.33%	
MACOUPIN	25	4,462	24 \$ 12,689	\$ 2,843.72	29		MACOUPIN	25	4,407	25 \$ 12,179	\$ 2,763.66	33	77	-4.02%	83	-2.82%	
MADISON	6	25,300	6 \$ 61,521	\$ 2,457.90	47		MADISON	6	24,687	6 \$ 61,701	\$ 2,499.31	46	51	0.29%	51	1.69%	
MASON	66	1,407	67 \$ 3,480	\$ 2,473.44	46		MASON	68	1,376	69 \$ 3,289	\$ 2,389.31	57	86	-5.48%	86	-3.40%	
MCDONOUGH	49	2,484	43 \$ 6,626	\$ 2,666.95	33		MCDONOUGH	48	2,459	43 \$ 6,745	\$ 2,743.23	34	35	1.80%	40	2.86%	
MCHENNY	9	19,331	9 \$ 36,312	\$ 1,878.45	85		MCHENNY	9	18,964	9 \$ 38,270	\$ 2,018.06	84	12	5.39%	12	7.43%	
MCLEAN	14	10,726	18 \$ 21,817	\$ 2,033.97	78		MCLEAN	14	10,574	17 \$ 22,243	\$ 2,103.45	75	32	1.95%	29	3.42%	
MERCER	65	1,411	64 \$ 3,648	\$ 2,585.65	39		MERCER	66	1,386	63 \$ 3,743	\$ 2,700.75	36	28	2.62%	27	4.45%	
MONTGOMERY	47	2,579	44 \$ 6,392	\$ 2,478.75	45		MONTGOMERY	47	2,525	48 \$ 5,841	\$ 2,313.22	63	95	-8.61%	94	-6.68%	
OGLE	27	4,370	35 \$ 8,395	\$ 1,921.14	84		OGLE	27	4,333	37 \$ 7,779	\$ 1,795.21	96	90	-7.34%	93	-6.55%	
PEORIA	11	13,781	11 \$ 27,345	\$ 1,984.24	81		PEORIA	11	13,491	11 \$ 27,662	\$ 2,050.43	82	40	1.16%	32	3.34%	
PIATT	68	1,404	86 \$ 2,552	\$ 1,818.12	93		PIATT	65	1,390	87 \$ 2,577	\$ 1,853.78	93	44	0.95%	49	1.96%	
ROCK ISLAND	13	12,049	12 \$ 26,148	\$ 2,170.13	65		ROCK ISLAND	13	11,789	12 \$ 26,416	\$ 2,240.77	68	42	1.02%	36	3.26%	
SAINT CLAIR	5	29,288	2 \$ 111,995	\$ 3,823.96	10		SAINT CLAIR	5	29,441	2 \$ 115,229	\$ 3,913.96	8	26	2.89%	44	2.35%	
SANGAMON	10	16,370	10 \$ 34,775	\$ 2,124.38	68		SANGAMON	10	16,138	10 \$ 36,364	\$ 2,253.30	67	15	4.57%	15	6.07%	
SCHUYLER	92	607	91 \$ 2,122	\$ 3,494.11	16		SCHUYLER	92	592	91 \$ 2,089	\$ 3,527.22	17	60	-1.53%	56	0.95%	
STEPHENSON	31	3,761	34 \$ 8,628	\$ 2,294.04	61		STEPHENSON	31	3,686	34 \$ 8,436	\$ 2,288.98	64	68	-2.22%	63	-0.22%	
TAZEWELL	12	12,176	15 \$ 22,610	\$ 1,856.91	90		TAZEWELL	12	11,979	14 \$ 23,447	\$ 1,957.26	90	21	3.70%	23	5.40%	
WARREN	71	1,340	81 \$ 2,969	\$ 2,216.37	63		WARREN	71	1,318	84 \$ 2,647	\$ 2,008.28	86	97	-10.85%	98	-9.39%	
WASHINGTON	73	1,325	83 \$ 2,740	\$ 2,067.94	75		WASHINGTON	72	1,310	82 \$ 2,856	\$ 2,180.85	72	19	4.25%	21	5.46%	
WHITESIDE	24	4,986	30 \$ 10,242	\$ 2,054.36	76		WHITESIDE	24	4,868	32 \$ 9,808	\$ 2,014.54	85	81	-4.24%	76	-1.94%	
WILL	3	39,376	5 \$ 73,873	\$ 1,876.10	86		WILL	3	38,964	4 \$ 77,043	\$ 1,977.27	88	18	4.29%	24	5.39%	
WINNEBAGO	8	20,959	7 \$ 42,961	\$ 2,049.79	77		WINNEBAGO	8	20,568	7 \$ 42,498	\$ 2,066.23	80	56	-1.08%	57	0.80%	
WOODFORD	39	3,166	59 \$ 4,515	\$ 1,426.32	102		WOODFORD	38	3,123	54 \$ 5,009	\$ 1,603.88	99	6	10.94%	8	12.45%	

Illinois Total	721,575	1,680,632	\$2,329.12		Illinois Totals	705,562	1,687,260	\$2,391.30	
Average County Information									
			Ave C&P	Ave C&P Per Vet					
Average County Total Comp & Penn	2014	\$16,477	\$2,329.12		Total Change from 14'	(15,993)	6,628		
Average County Total Comp & Penn	2015	\$16,542	\$2,391.30		Change From 2014	-2.22%	0.39%		
Total Change from 2014			0.39%	2.67%	Average Population	6917			
					Less Cook				
					2014 DIC Benefits	\$2,519,841			
					2015 DIC Benefits	\$2,763,600			
					Increase in DIC Benefits	\$243,759			
National Average C&P Increase		0.69%	2.17%		Education Benefits McHenry County Veterans	\$6,945,733			

\* = Indicates a VAC      **Bold = Indicates C&P > State Average**      **Bold % Change = Indicates % Change > State Average**  
**Blue % Change = Indicates % Change > National Average**  
 # = Indicates Ranking

The Following formula was used to determine the loss due to veterans moving or dying, and estimated increase due to claims development.

2014 Total County C&P times 1000.	State	McHenry	
Above result times the 12/2014 COLA increase	\$1,680,631,966	\$36,312,302	
2015 Veterans Population in County minus 2014 Population	\$28,570,743	\$617,309	
Difference in Population times 2014 Average C&P per Veteran	-15,993	(367)	
Above result times the COLA Increase (1.7%)	-\$37,250,346	-\$689,872	
Total effect from loss of Veterans = sum of above 2	-\$633,256	-\$11,728	
Non-Claim development related increase = COLA Increase minus above	-\$37,883,602	-\$701,599	\$ 2,659,148
Total Increase/(Decrease) in C&P = 2014 C&P minus 2015 C&P times 1000	-\$9,312,859	-\$84,290	
Increase from Claims Development = above minus non-claim development	\$6,627,867	\$ 1,957,549	\$ 2,201,308
	\$15,940,726	\$ 2,041,839	

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

## FY 2016 Annual Report

### Distribution List:

Bruce Rauner	Governor	State of Illinois
Jack Franks	Chairman	McHenry County Board (+16)
Kurt Daesch	Secretary	Illinois Association of County VAC's
Chuck Wheeler	Chairman	Public Health & Human Services Committee (+6)
	Supervisors	McHenry County Townships (17)
	Elected	U.S. and State Senators / Representatives (11)

### Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

Joe Kersten	Chairman
Pat Conley	Sr. Vice Chairman
Frank Steckelberg	Jr. Vice Chairman
Harry Van Beetz	Judge Advocate
James Koch	Sergeant at Arms
Eugene Boxlitner	Chaplain
Michael Wisniewski	Secretary
Gerald Raske	Treasurer of VAC Inc

### Veterans Service Organization's

#### American Legion

Commander	Post 119	Fox River Grove
Commander	Post 171	Crystal Lake
Commander	Post 192	Marengo
Commander	Post 253	Richmond
Commander	Post 265	Harvard
Commander	Post 276	Cary
Commander	Post 412	Woodstock
Commander	Post 491	McHenry
Commander	Post 606	Hebron
Commander	Post 673	Huntley
Commander	Post 1231	Lake in the Hills
Commander	County Council	

#### AMVETS

Commander	Post 245	Cary
Commander	Post 269	Woodstock

#### The Marine Corps League

Commandant	McHenry County Detachment	Woodstock
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#### Military Order of Cooties

via VFW Post 4600

#### Polish Legion of American Veterans

Commander	Post 188	McHenry
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#### Sad Sacks

via AMVETS 269 & 245

#### Student Veterans of America

President via Student Advisor

#### Veterans of Foreign Wars

Commander	Post 4600	McHenry
Commander	Post 5040	Woodstock
Commander	Post 11496	Johnsburg
Commander	Post 12014	Crystal Lake

#### Vietnow

President	McHenry County	Marengo
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