VETERANS ASSISTANCE

COMMISSION OF

DUPAGE COUNTY

2017

ANNUAL REPORT
January 12, 2018

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

Dear Governor Rauner,

This letter is written pursuant to the requirements of 330 ILCS 45/8, concerning the VAC Superintendent’s annual report to the Governor.

The VAC of DuPage County now moves into its twenty-fifth year of serving veterans. The DuPage County Government is recognized and commended for their ongoing support for this program.

The staff includes the Superintendent, Steven L. Fixler; Administrative Assistant, Bill Brophy and Case Manager, Bernadette Wawczak.

The VAC Board of Directors is also recognized for their dedication to assisting veterans and the ongoing support and guidance provided to the office. This Board is composed of representatives of the various veterans’ organizations.

The members of the VAC Board are as follows:

- **President**: Michael Barbour  
  19th District Veterans of Foreign Wars
- **Vice President**: Donald Sender  
  Reserve Officers of America
- **Secretary**: Stanley Herzog  
  Viet Nam Veterans of America
- **Treasurer**: Joseph R. Craig  
  American Legion 11th District
- **Judge Advocate**: Deldon D. Miller  
  DuPage County 40/8
- **Member**: Sid Bergh  
  Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #2801
- **Member**: Richard Wagner  
  Military Officers Assoc. of America
- **Member**: William Barta  
  Milt. Order of Devil Dogs/Marine Corps League
- **Member**: Frank Trout  
  Disabled American Veterans
- **Member**: Rita Kollias  
  Marine Corps League #399
- **Member**: Bruce Mayor  
  Jewish War Veterans #54
Major accomplishments and milestones for the past year are:

- The VAC assisted over 380 Veterans and/or dependents with assistance in the form of rent/mortgage, utilities, auto repairs and car payments; medical bills, food, fuel and other payments. The amount expended for Veterans Assistance totaled approximately $252,057.00.
- The VAC assisted over 300 additional Veterans and/or family members in a non-monetary manner by providing other assistance and information and referral.
- A subsidized transportation service has been contracted to serve veterans with a portal to portal service from home to VA medical facilities. $39,197.00 (part of the $252,057) was expended on this service. Currently the VAC has 160 Veterans registered.
- Participated in numerous senior fairs and Veteran Resource fairs for Veterans.
- VAC conducted its ninth seminar for service officers from the Various Veterans' organizations. Civilian organizations were also invited.
- The VAC acted as a drop off point for DuPage Basket Brigade and the Marine Corps Toys for Tots.

Homeless Veterans: This continues to be a great concern. The VAC has five primary valuable resources.

- The Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans (MSHV) in Wheaton has proved to be a much needed and superior facility. The VAC endeavors to support the shelter and to assist residents whenever possible. We encourage all to support this worthwhile endeavor as they expand services to a greater number of veterans.

- The Homeless Program at Hines VA hospital. The VAC refers homeless and at risk for homelessness Vets to Hines. A medical triage and evaluation is available and a comprehensive list of supportive services. Often referrals are made back to the VAC for assistance.

- DuPage PADS: The PADS system provides immediate shelter and nourishment for the homeless. The VAC works with the case managers at PADS to identify veterans who may qualify for VAC assistance. The VAC has continued to provide a weekly presence at the PADS headquarters and also goes to the night shelters looking for homeless veterans to provide them needed services.

- Supportive Services Veteran Families Grant (SSVF): Both the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans and Catholic Charities receive SSVF from the VA to provide rental assistance to veterans and their families to help prevent them from becoming homeless. The VAC has referred over 70 veterans for SSVF Grant assistance.

- The DuPage Homeless Veterans Taskforce (DHVTF) continues with the VAC (Chair), Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans, DuPage PADS, Hines VA Hospital Homeless Section, DuPage County Community Services and Catholic Charities. Our mission is to end Veteran Homelessness in DuPage County.
As evidenced by the expenditure charts, VAC monetary assistance was primarily for auto repairs/payments and rent/mortgage payments. These key payments help Veterans maintain both employment and prevent homelessness. The category of Other reflects expenditures other than the categories already listed, such as prescription medication, storage units and very small medical bills.
The VAC’s goals and initiatives for the coming year:

- Continue to work with the DuPage County Probation Office with their 2018 Veterans Court Track (VCT) and with JUST of DuPage (Justice - Understanding - Service – Teaching) by going into the county jail to work with Veterans.

- Continue to work with IDES and workNet DuPage to help Veterans seek employment.

- The VAC is a member of the DuPage County Homeless Continuum and will continue to provide services to homeless Veterans and work with agencies promoting affordable housing for Veterans (MSHV, Hines VA, PADS, Peoples Resource Center).

- Continue to support Illinois Joining Forces as a member.

- The VAC is a member of the DuPage Veterans Foundation and assists in the planning and execution of a fund raiser, on May 5, 2018, to raise money for Honor Flight Chicago.

- Identify training opportunities for staff.

- Work with Mental Health providers regarding "mental first aid" to screen clients for needs and make appropriate referrals particularly about PTSD.

- To continue efforts to coordinate services between the various VACs in the State. To work with our State association, Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions and communicate data of mutual interest.

- Continue to expand our outreach program, by providing monthly visits to PADS, the College of DuPage’s Veteran’s Service Center, Loaves and Fishes and other agencies that have asked us to have a presence at their location.

- Continue to coordinate with civilian agencies and find additional civilian agencies to provide support for our veterans.

- Continue to act as the Chair of the DuPage Homeless Veterans Taskforce and complete our mission of ending Veteran Homelessness in DuPage County.

The Veterans Assistance Commission of DuPage County projects a year of both greater need and greater services to our veterans.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven L. Fixler
Superintendent