

VETERANS ASSISTANCE

COMMISSION OF

DUPAGE COUNTY

2015

ANNUAL REPORT



Veterans Assistance Commission of DuPage County

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Serving Veterans and Their Families

January 12, 2016

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 a twenty-third 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	Joseph R. Craig	American Legion Executive Committee
Vice President	Donald Sender	Reserve Officers of America
Secretary	Stanley Herzog	Viet Nam Veterans of America
Treasurer	Michael Barbour	Veterans of Foreign Wars
Judge Advocate	Deldon D. Miller	DuPage County 40/8
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

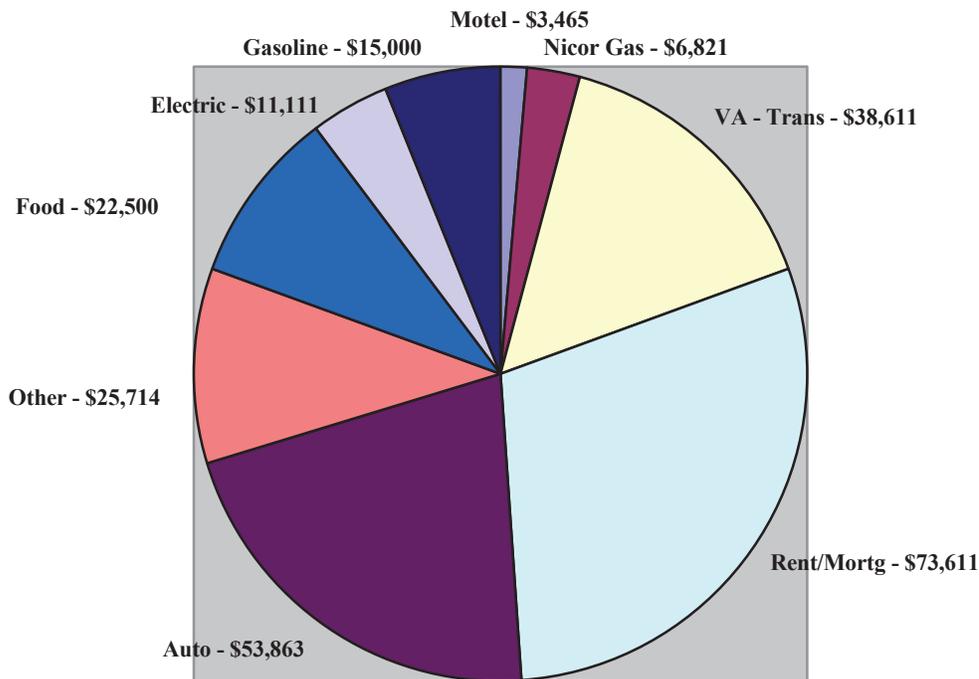
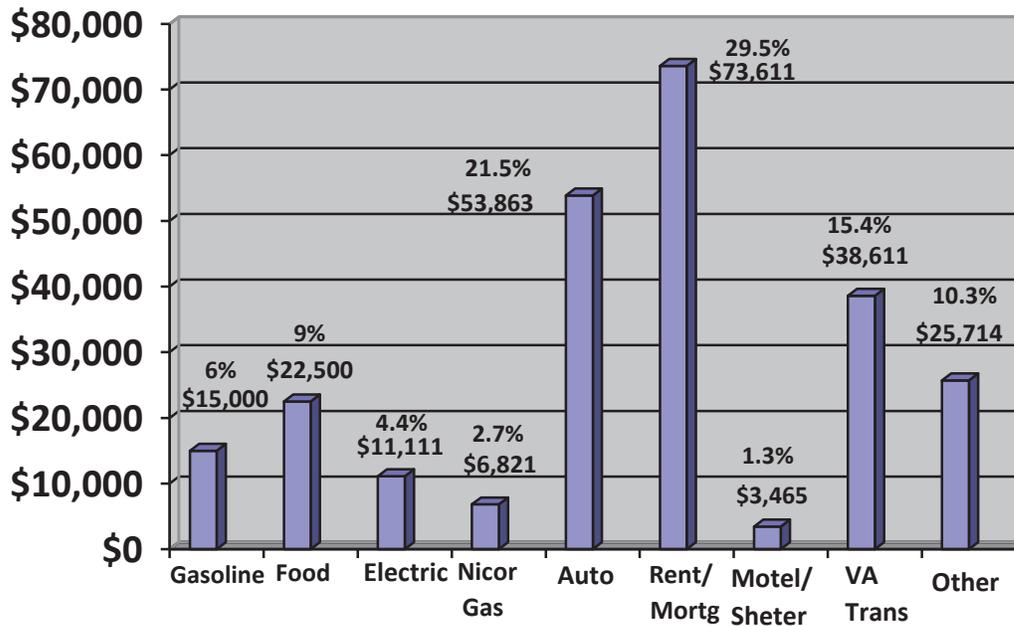
Major accomplishments and milestones for the past year are:

- The VAC assisted over 350 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 \$249,401.00.
- 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. \$38,611.00 (part of the \$249,401) was expended on this service. Currently the VAC has approximately 140 Veterans registered.
- Participated in numerous senior fairs and job fairs for Veterans and maintained a booth at the county fair.
- VAC conducted its seventh seminar for service officers from the Various Veterans' organizations. The theme was Veterans Employment. Civilian organizations were also invited, so they could learn about the different aspects of Veterans Employment.
- The VAC acted as a drop off point for both Operation Support Our Troops - America and the Marine Corps Toys for Tots.
- The VAC received a \$30,000 Vet Cash Grant from IDVA and is currently serving veterans in various ways from dental teeth cleaning to dentures and in receiving new eye glasses.

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

- The Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans 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 55 veterans for SSVF Grant assistance.
- The DuPage Homeless Veterans Taskforce (DHVTF) was created 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 eliminate Veteran Homelessness in DuPage County by the end of 2016.

**VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF DUPAGE COUNTY
FY2015
EXPENDITURES**



As evidenced by the expenditure charts, the bulk of VAC monetary assistance was directed toward preventing homelessness and the improvement in the quality of life for our veterans, widows and their families. 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 Veterans Treatment Track Program.
- The VAC is working with IDES and workNet DuPage to coordinate Veterans job fairs and services in conjunction with both veteran and private organizations.
- The VAC is a member of the DuPage County Homeless Continuum and will continue to expand services to homeless Veterans and will work with agencies promoting affordable housing for Veterans (MSHV, HUD VASH, SSVF, PADS).
- The VAC is a member of Illinois Joining Forces. The Superintendent is the Chair of the Benefits and Emergency Assistance Working Group.
- The VAC is a member of the DuPage Veterans Foundation and is assisting in the planning and execution of a fund raiser, on May 7, 2016, to raise money for Honor Flight Chicago.
- Identify training opportunities for staff. One staff member will attend a Grant Writing Training next February.
- 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, to standardize services 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.
- Complete the DVHTF's mission of ending Veteran Homelessness by the end of 2016.

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

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Superintendent