

VETERANS ASSISTANCE

COMMISSION OF

DUPAGE COUNTY

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



Veterans Assistance Commission of DuPage County

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Serving Veterans and Their Families

December 31, 2020

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker
Governor of Illinois
State House Room 207
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

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-eight 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	19 th District Veterans of Foreign Wars
Vice President	Donald Sender	Reserve Officers of America
Secretary	Stanley Herzog	Vietnam Veterans of America
Treasurer	Richard Greenwald	American Legion 11 th 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	Jay Donovan	Disabled American Veterans
Member	John Schmitt	Marine Corps League #399
Member	Bruce Mayor	Jewish War Veterans #54

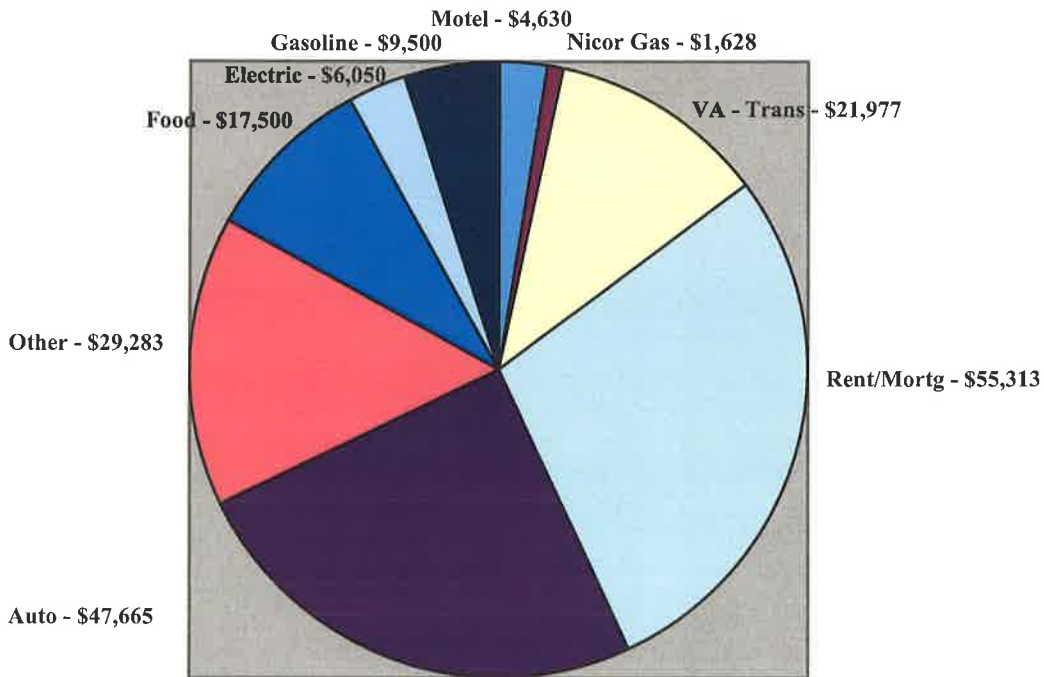
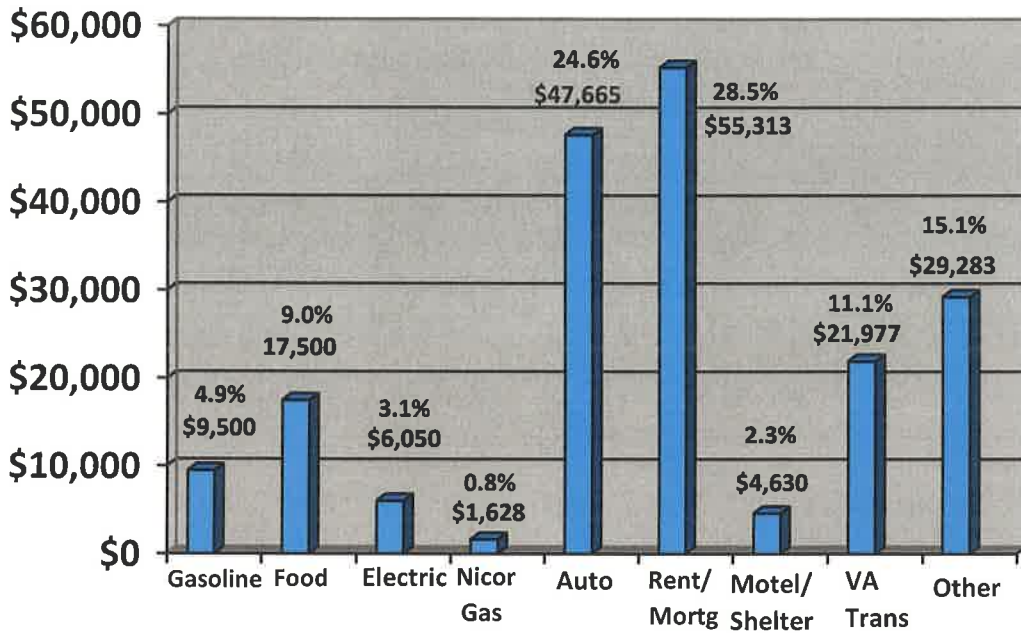
Our accomplishments were curtailed this year due to the pandemic, but we continued to provide services to Veterans and their families, and our accomplishments were:

- With the Covid-19 situation, we had a drop of clients. Our office stayed opened and we worked from the office and remotely. But we were still able to support the Veterans and their families that we worked with.
- Our office worked with DuPage County Community Services to provide Covid-19 relief financial support.
- The VAC assisted over 100 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 \$195,959.
- The VAC assisted over 150 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. \$34,909 (part of the \$195,959) was expended on this service. Currently the VAC has 150 Veterans registered.
- The VAC acted as a drop off point for the Marine Corps Leagues Toys for Tots.

Homeless Veterans: This continues to be a great concern. The VAC has six 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 are 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.
- 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 60 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.
- The VAC, VA Hines Hospital and the DuPage County Health Department have continued the DuPage County Veteran Suicide Prevention Coalition to include the DuPage County Community to provide services, education, and strategies to everyone to prevent Veteran Suicides. We will meet quarterly basis.

**VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF DUPAGE COUNTY
FY2020 EXPENDITURES**



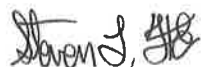
As evidenced by the expenditure charts, VAC monetary assistance was primarily for auto repairs/payments and rent/mortgage payments. These key payments help Veterans maintain both employment and prevent homelessness. The category of Other reflects expenditures other than the categories already listed, such as prescription medication, storage units and very small medical bills.

The VAC's goals and initiatives for the coming year:

- First and foremost, get back on track like 2019 to support Veterans and their families.
- Continue to work with the DuPage County Veterans Court and with JUST of DuPage 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 (MSHV, Hines VA, PADS, Catholic Charities) promoting affordable housing for Veterans.
- Continue to support Illinois Joining Forces.
- The VAC is a member of the DuPage Veterans Foundation and assists in the planning and execution of our fund raiser 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 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.
- Continue to be the Co-Chair of the DuPage Veterans Suicide Prevention Coalition.

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