

# 2023 Annual Report



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Client Outreach & Educational Outreach Available by Appointment

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# VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF McHENRY COUNTY

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Michael A. Iwanicki  
Superintendent

February 14, 2023

The Honorable JB Pritzker  
Governor of Illinois  
State Capital Room 207  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

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, 2023.

On behalf of the Commission and the Staff of the Veterans Assistance Commission, we proudly submit this annual report highlighting the services provided by the Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County IL. With the support of your office and that of the IL legislators who provided statutory clarifications to the Military Veterans Assistance Act the VAC was able to expand service and training to better address the needs of our local veteran's community.

Successes over 2023 must be shared with our service partners which include, the local military veterans service organizations, US Department of Veterans Affairs staff at the Lovell FHCC, McHenry County Government, Veterans Path to Hope, Elderwerks of Palatine IL, Senior Services, Senior Care Volunteer Network, and the Habitat for Humanity.

The Veterans Assistance Commission Inc. or VAC Inc is a local NFP that supports the VAC and provides scholarships to the children and grandchildren of McHenry County veterans. Additionally, the VAC Inc has assisted lower income veterans with necessary car repairs and emergency home repairs. Their work is possible thanks to donations from the public and special donors such as the American Veterans Help Corps, Bowlers to Veterans Link, and some of the Post's and Auxiliaries throughout the County.

One of our biggest highlights this year is the creation of the Veterans Wellness Program. This was approved by the Commission in response to the Mental Health Crisis that had disproportionately impacted the veteran's community. Traditionally, the VAC works with veterans and their eligible family members to address immediate needs in the form of financial assistance, transportation, and VA Claims representation. Although successful at addressing the immediate need, these services do not provide much in the way of mental health support.

Veterans Wellness Programs are unique for our VAC in that it focuses on groups rather than individuals. The purpose is to bring veterans' and veteran families together in a safe and inviting environment where they can share common interests and concerns. The goals of the programs include reducing self-imposed isolation, encouraging conversation, and education to veterans and the public to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. Veterans Path to Hope had already been running some of these programs. Partnering with VPH we hope to continue expanding those programs (such as Wednesday Group and VPH – Outdoors) while bringing new programs on-line. New programs such as Veterans Gaming are provided not only in partnership with VPH but also with veterans' service organizations within the County.

We at the VAC greatly appreciate the opportunity to formally share our activities over the past year and look forward to any feedback.

Very Respectfully,

*Michael A. Iwanicki*

Michael A. Iwanicki  
Superintendent / CVSO

Veterans for Veterans; It's not just what we do, it's who we are

# Other Events and Staff Bio's

## Regarding Personnel

- **Addition of the VAC Clerk** - With the growth of work associated with assistance claims, VA representation, and reporting it was decided that additional administrative help would be needed. We determined it was time to look for candidates in July. The McHenry County HR Department took to lead to help us fill the position in September.
- **New Transportation Specialist** – After losing a driver to another agency, we were able to fill the vacancy by August.
- **New Pay Structure** – With the passing of the Clarification of the Military Veterans Assistance Act, the Commission decided to adopt a “Step – Scale” for compensation of all employees effective January 1, 2023. The VAC worked closely with the County HR Department resulting in a very smooth transition.
- **Veterans Advocate Training** – Two of our Veterans Service Officers have met the requirements to start Advocate Training. They kicked off by successfully completing Advanced Appeals.
- **AVECO** – The VAC was able to send a Veterans Service Officer to the Association of Veterans Education Certifying Officials training conference in Saint Louis.

## Other Events

- **Regular Saturday Hours** – Working with Veterans Path to Hope in Crystal Lake, the VAC has been seeing clients who were unable to see a VSO during the week on Saturdays. We have been maintaining hours from 9-Noon most Saturdays.
- **Crystal Lake Lions Club** – The VAC was invited to the club's annual dinner as part of this year's theme of recognizing veterans. The Crystal Lake American Legions was recognized for their work in the community which included a sizeable donation to future projects.
- **22 Mile March** – Organized by the McHenry American Legion, VAC staff participated in the march to draw attention to the issue of Veterans Suicide.
- **Veterans in Crisis** – Partnering with Rosecrance and staff from the Lovell FHCC the VAC provided information in a classroom setting to McHenry County Sheriffs Police regarding working with veterans in various crisis scenarios.
- **Vet-Fest** – Organized by the Huntley American Legion, the VAC was invited to set up a booth and address questions from the public.
- **Ageing Better Expo** – This is an annual expo put on by Elderwerks in Palatine IL. It brings organizations that provided goods and services to the senior community in one place. Along with the VAC of Kane County, the VAC was available to address questions from the public and provide a presentation covering changes associated with the PACT Act.
- **VAC Promotional Video** – With the help of the McHenry County Communications the VAC put together a promotional video in coordination with Operation Greenlight which shows support for our military veterans.
- **Veterans Day** – For the first time in 20+ years the County of McHenry hosted a Veterans Day Ceremony. The Ceremony took place at the Administration Building in front of the Vietnam memorial and was conducted by the Woodstock American Legion and VFW. Speakers included the County Board Chairman and two of our local representatives to the House in Springfield. The VAC provided refreshments and addressed questions from the public. Meanwhile at the Woodstock, Rolling Thunder sponsored an event at the Harley

## Other Events and Staff Bio's

Davidson dealership. The VAC was on hand to address VA related questions from the public.

- **Operation Greenlight** – A program that encourages having green lights shine on buildings in recognition of our Military Veterans for 7 days to include Veterans Day. McHenry County Government participates in this program. Also, this year the city of Woodstock observed the program with an official proclamation which was presented to the VAC, the Woodstock American Legion and VFW.

### VAC Staff

**Commission Chairman Joseph Kersten** – Joe served in the US Army in country Vietnam with the 213<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment 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 where he earned the rate of EM1(SW) and was later 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.

**Assistant Superintendent Victor Somoza** – Victor served honorably in the US Army from 2008 – 2015. Victor is a combat veteran having served in Iraq. He was helping veterans with their education benefits at Lake County College when he accepted a position with the VAC. In addition to the duties of an accredited VSO, Victor acts as our expert on education benefits. He stepped up to the position of Assistant Superintendent (formally VSO II) in 2022.

**Veterans Service Officer Keith Duggan (USMC Retired)** – Keith previously worked for the VAC before moving to Japan for 10 years. He continued to use his training to assist retiring service members navigate the Veterans Benefits Administration. As a retired member of the US Armed Forces, Keith is our local expert on anything TriCare.

**Veterans Service Officer Habacuc Rico** – 'Rico' served honorably in the US Army Military Police Corps from 2008-2015 and deployed to Afghanistan in 2009-2010 and 2012. After the service, he worked as Veteran Coordinator at McHenry County College and later as a Veteran Intake Coordinator with Healthy Minds Health Bodies. He is active as a volunteer with The American Legion, VFW, Veterans Path to Hope, and WWP. He joined the VAC in October of 2022.

**Veterans Service Officer Anna Marchese** – Anna is a US Navy veteran who joined the VAC in October 2022. She previously worked as a Senior Benefits Advisor for the VA's Transition Assistance Program; assisting thousands of transitioning service members understand their benefits.

**Office Coordinator Jennifer Kunke** – Jennifer's father served as a Navy Sea-Bee. Jennifer started in public service in 2017 within the accounting department of the Mental Health Board. After serving as an Assessments Specialist in the County Assessments Office Jennifer joined the VAC in 2021.

**Office Clerk Tara Guy** – Tara is an honorably discharged veteran of the Army National Guard and had received her formal education in Tourism & Recreation Management. Tara came to the VAC with a strong customer service background and started working for the VAC in October.

**Transportation Specialist Timothy McBride** – Timothy served as a Telecommunications Specialist with the US Air Force from 1981 – 1985. He Joined the VAC in 2021 while at the same time worked to earn a certificate in welding from McHenry County College.

## Other Events and Staff Bio's

**Transportation Specialist Gary Egan** – Gary served as a private in the US Army. He enjoyed a career with the County working in the Facilities Management department. After retirement, he joined the VAC as a Transportation Specialist.

**Transportation Specialist Larry Emricson** – Larry served honorably in the US Army from 1959 - 1962 as a combat engineer. He had served overseas in Germany and after returning home built his own manufacturing business. After making the decision to retire Larry sold his business and in 2018 started driving for the Veterans Assistance Commission.

**Transportation Specialist Joseph Wolske** – Joseph is honorably discharged from the US Air Force where he serviced as a Jet Engine Mechanic. He retired from the Air Force in 2020 and started working for the VAC in August.

# 2023 VA Claims

The VAC of McHenry County has five persons qualified and accredited to present and prosecute VA claims before the Veterans Benefits Administration. Over 2023 our VSOs helped 683 claimants file their VA Claims. The three most common claims are Service-Connected Disability, Veterans & Survivors Pension, and Dependency and Indemnity. The VAC also represents a claimant's review or appeal of a denied claim, as well as other less frequent types of VA claims.

Over Fiscal Year 2022 the VAC of McHenry County had successfully prosecuted 357 claims against the US Department of Veterans Affairs (Benefits Administration). The total of new claims dollars awarded was \$5,294,112.41 of which \$5,125,988.22 went to veteran families living in Illinois and \$4,096,876.75 were specific to McHenry County families.

The VAC tracks the recurring payments awarded to our veterans and survivors. The VAC assumes that the monthly award is granted for four calendar years and then the VA drops the award to 'zero'. Although this method significantly underestimates the ongoing awards received by McHenry County veterans and their survivors, the conservative figure is an adjustment for veterans or survivors that are no longer living in the county. A more accurate figure would be at least 50% of the total awards granted by the VA Benefits Administration as the VAC historically accounts for up to 75% of the annual award increase. The following table includes figures from 2022. The VA will publish its 2023 expenditures sometime late spring 2024. The Average Monthly Increase per the VA is the difference between the total paid to McHenry County Veterans in the stated year and what was paid the previous year. The VAC increase represents Claims prosecuted by the VAC Office. This includes claims the VAC prosecuted for veterans outside McHenry County.

Year	Per VA – Ave. Monthly Increase	Monthly Increase in VA Awards Prosecuted by VAC	VA Total Compensation Paid To McHenry County Vets.	Monthly Payments by the VA	Monthly Pmt. of VA Awards Prosecuted by the VAC (4 yr Formula)	Monthly Pmt. of VA Awards Prosecuted by the VAC (50% Formula)
2020	\$ 53,712	\$291,239	\$55,558,994	\$4,629,916	\$1,045,635	\$2,314,598
2021	\$681,621	\$276,563	\$63,738,442	\$5,311,537	\$1,070,835	\$2,655,768
2022	\$1,184,089	\$327,567	\$77,947,504	\$6,495,625	\$1,202,061	\$3,247,813
2023		\$441,176			\$1,469,057	

Over 2022, VAC Clients received an additional \$5,294,112 in benefits payments from the VA. The blank spaces in the above table will be filled once the official expenditures are released by the VA. Recurring monthly benefit payments received by VAC Clients who were initially awarded during fiscal years 2020 – 2023 are receiving a total of \$14,424,726 annually (\$1,469,057 per month). Per the VBA's predictive analytics, the veterans population dropped 12.6% over 2022. Current census estimates (2022) show a veteran population of 14,830 or a drop of 2.77%.

Associated with the VA Disability, the VA invests a considerable amount in support of our local veterans and their dependents. This amounted to \$148,452,968 or \$19,560,053 greater than in 2021. The following illustrates the VA's local investments for our veterans by category over 2022. The National Average increase in VA spending over 2022 was 19.02%. In McHenry County VA spending increased 15.18% (spending in Illinois was up 15.44%).

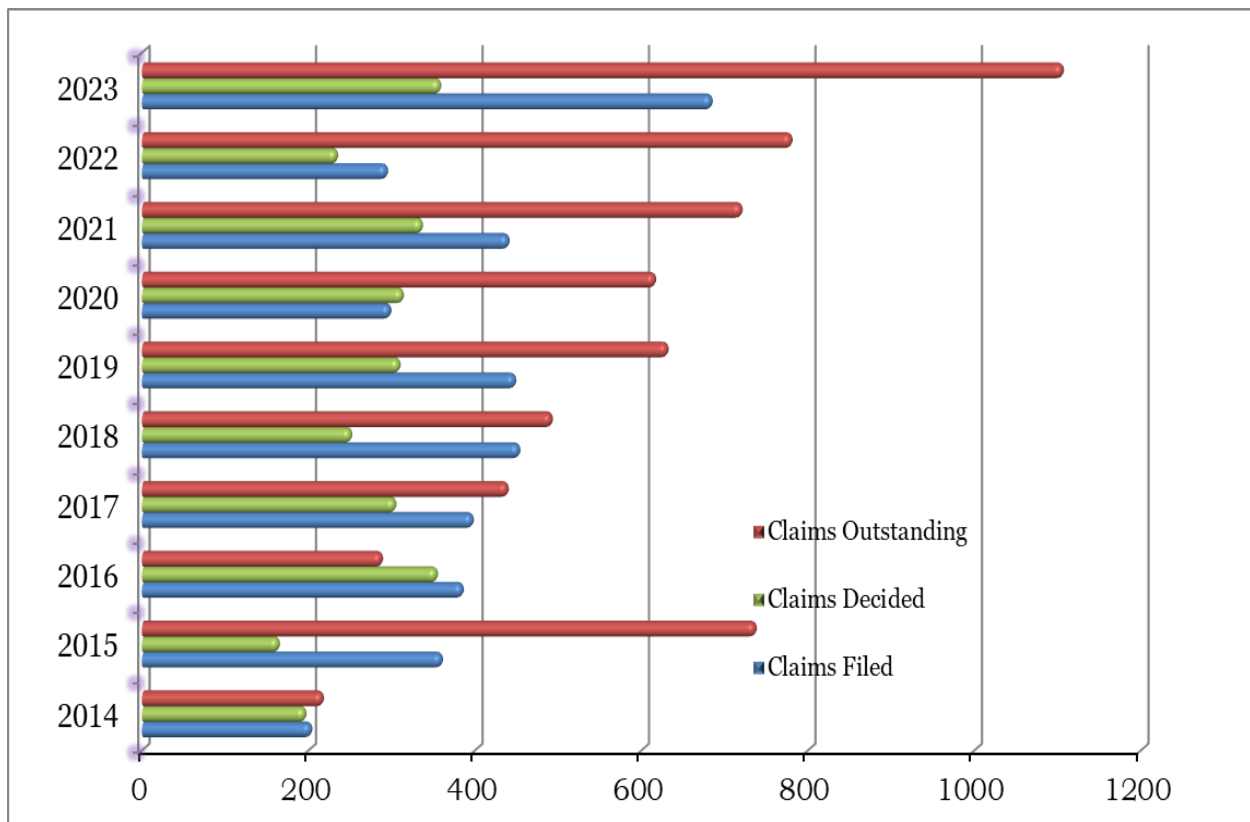
Compensation & Pension	Education	Insurance & Indemnities	Health Care
\$77,949,504	\$6,151,961	\$959,965	\$63,393,538

# 2023 VA Claims

In August of 2022 the President signed into law the PACT act which identified 20+ new presumptive conditions related to environmental hazards. The hazards were primarily related to Agent Orange Exposure and Burn Pits. An important issue overlooked by most veterans was additional language in the Act that gives instruction to the Veterans Benefits Administration regarding how to treat toxic exposure. Veterans were swift to apply for the new presumptive conditions but needed to be educated regarding the section on toxic exposure. This opened the doors for many veterans who suffered illness or injury for conditions that could have been caused by Trichloroethylene, Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF firefighting agent), or served on one of the contaminated military facilities.

Veteran homeowners who have been rated by the VA 30% or greater are eligible for a property homestead exemption ranging from \$2,500 off the equalized assessed value to totally exempt from property taxes for veterans rated at least 70%. The total amount of assessed value waived is less than 1% of the total assessed value of McHenry County properties. The exemption has attracted disabled veterans from outside McHenry County. Veterans relocating to McHenry County have frequently been purchasing difficult to sell properties (source: personal discussions with realtors). Like the VA Cash benefits awarded, monies saved by the veterans' family from the Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption are very likely being reinvested in the community through the purchase of goods and services from local vendors.

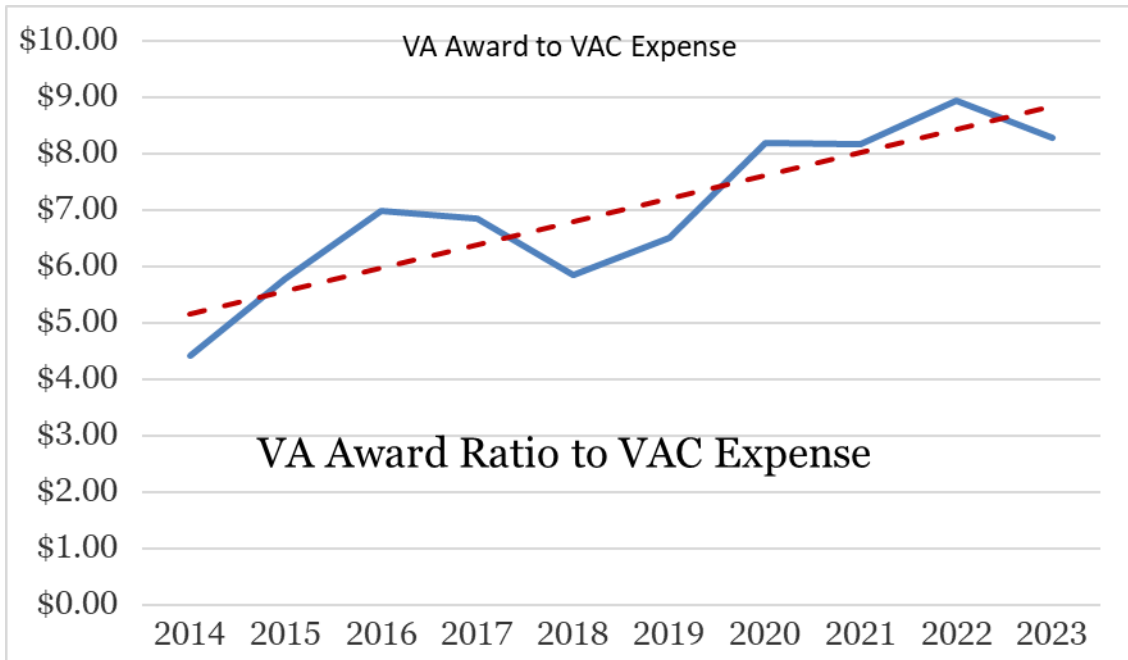
The following illustrates the Claims filed, awarded, and awaiting a decision.



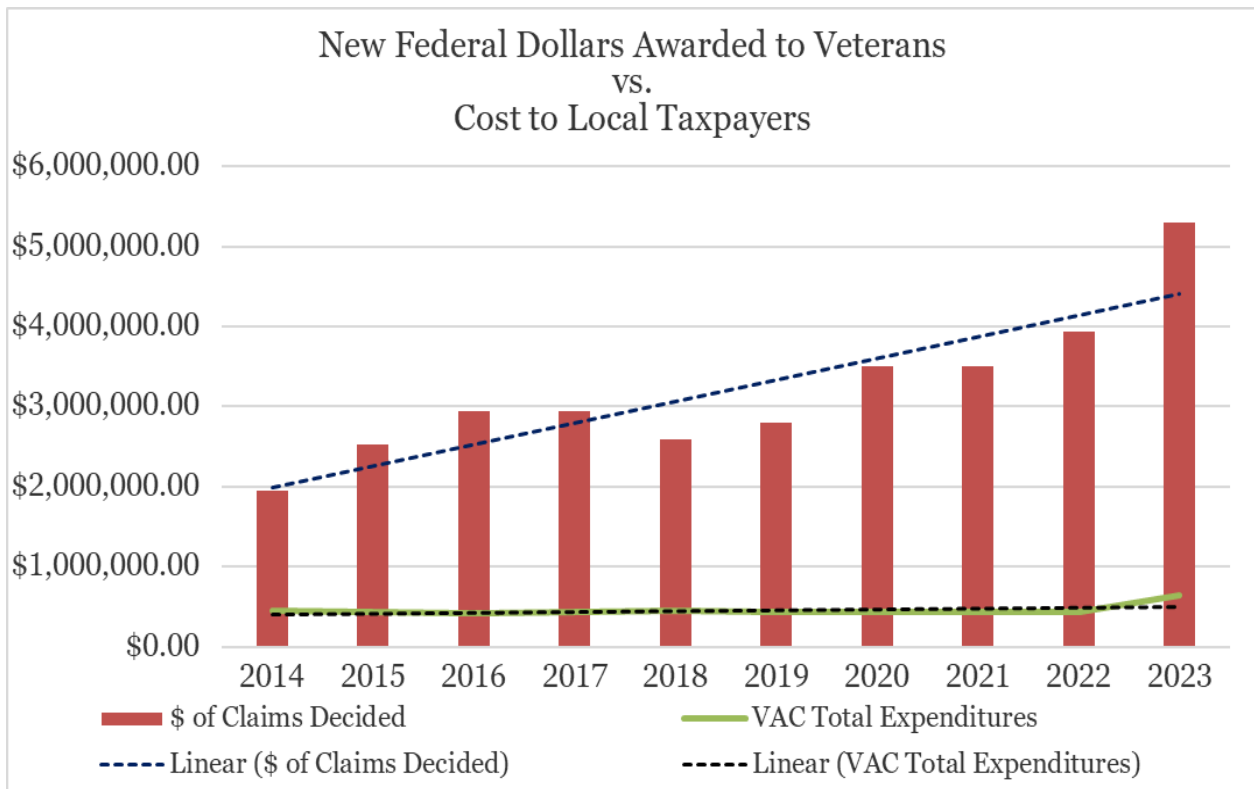
The following illustrates the trend of new VA cash benefits awarded to VAC clients 2014 - 2023 compared to each McHenry County taxpayer dollar spent by the VAC each of those years. For every local taxpayer dollar, the VAC spent from FY1998 thru FY2023 \$2.89 was returned to the veterans' community in the form of cash benefits from the US Department of Veterans Affairs. For each tax dollar the VAC spent in 2023 \$8.28 was returned in the form of VA cash benefits to veterans.



# 2023 VA Claims



The following shows the McHenry County taxpayers total cost of VAC operations compared to the total new VA Compensations Awards granted to VAC clients over the past 10 years.



# 2023 VA Claims

The Following is a summary of 2022 VA Claims expenditures (Source of original data: US Department Veterans Affairs). Veterans Population was determined using predictive analytics and 2020 census data. McHenry "Rank" is compared all counties in the state.

**Bold** = Above State Average    **Blue Number** = Above National Average    **Blue and Bold** = Above State & National Average

Early data from the Census positively impacted the numbers for Illinois and McHenry County. McHenry County had a large decrease in its veteran population per the VBA. Unfortunately, the County also lost veterans due to relocation and death.

County	2022 Veteran Population*	2021 Veteran Population	% Change in Veteran Population	Rank by Veteran Population Retention
ILLINOIS	569,448	591,269	-3.69%	38
<b>MCHENRY*</b>	<b>13,332</b>	<b>15,253</b>	<b>-12.60%</b>	<b>95</b>
National	18,522,638	19,088,805	-2.97%	

\* Figure is per the VBA. 2022 census figures show a significantly different number of veterans within McHenry County (14,830 or down 2.77% from 2021)

County	2022 Total Expenditure	2021 Total Expenditure	% Change in Total Expenditure	Rank by % Change in Total Expenditure
ILLINOIS	\$ 6,376,915,785	\$ 5,524,147,195	15.44%	45
<b>MCHENRY</b>	<b>\$ 148,453,268</b>	<b>\$ 128,892,291</b>	<b>15.18%</b>	<b>46</b>
National	\$ 266,753,154,539	\$ 224,121,984,595	19.02%	

It is the authors opinion that Total Compensation per Veteran Population is only useful as a tool to measure the outreach efforts of Veterans Service Officers (VSO's). The State did well in exceeding both the national average compensation and pension % increase and the 2022 Comp. & Pen Per Vet Population (up 25.05%). However, we are still well behind the national average compensation dollars per veteran population. This suggests that there are too many veterans and family members within the state who are unaware of both that they may be eligible for benefits and the free service to help them get benefits.

Assuming that we could get veterans access to information and Veterans Service Officers, and the state were to match the national average. Illinois veterans would have an additional \$1.21 Billion in VA compensation and pension benefits. If the VSOs in McHenry County were to achieve the national average that would be an additional \$18.94M in the pockets of our veterans.

County	2022 Compensation & Pension	2021 Compensation & Pension	% Change in Comp. & Pension	Rank by % Change in Comp. & Pension	2022 Comp. & Pen. per Vet Population
ILLINOIS	\$ 2,931,142,255	\$ 2,433,778,404	20.44%	26	\$ 5,147.34
<b>MCHENRY</b>	<b>\$ 77,948,504</b>	<b>\$ 63,738,442</b>	<b>22.29%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>\$ 5,846.58</b>
National	\$134,608,478,955	\$111,805,034,327	20.40%		\$ 7,267.24

# Veterans Financial Assistance Programs

Per 330 ILCS 45, the Military Veterans Assistance Act, (hereafter referred to as “The Act”) the Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County provides financial assistance to low-income veterans and their eligible survivors. In May of 2022 a clarification of the Act was signed into law (effective January 1, 2023) which referred to Article VI of the Public Aid Code. Article VI includes many forms of financial assistance that can be offered. In addition to Veterans Assistance and Emergency Assistance, the VAC of McHenry County also provides Veterans Disaster Assistance (a form of Emergency Assistance) which has very specific guidelines, and Caregiver Relief Veterans Assistance or CRVA (pronounced “serve-ah”) for short.

Because of the legal relationship between General Assistance and Veterans Assistance the VAC communicates with each township within the county monthly by mail to ensure that recipients of Veterans Assistance are not also receiving township General Assistance. Per Section 3.07 of the General Assistance Handbook an applicant who seeks assistance from a township will be presumed ineligible if the applicant may be eligible for Veterans Assistance from a county VAC. In cases where an applicant is referred by the Administrator of General Assistance from a township the county VAC shall decide of eligibility for Veterans Assistance.

The written guidelines for the administration of Veterans Assistance can be found on our website and are reviewed at least each odd numbered year or if there is a significant legal change (as was the case over 2023).



**Veterans Financial Assistance** is provided as a Flat Grant. Once eligibility is determined the recipient may direct funds to pay necessary expenses such as mortgage, rent, independent living, telephone, internet service, heat, electric, water & sewer, garbage, transportation, or food. In the case of mortgage or rent the VAC will only send payment in full. Commitments from other agencies or funds from the applicant must be included to assure full payment is sent. This is done because most mortgage companies will not accept a partial payment and the landlord is not obligated to keep a tenant that only makes partial or late payments. Independent Living is services provided to assist an applicant to stay in their home, or services that assist an applicant with transitioning from homelessness, drug or alcohol abuse,

etc... Services provided by Veterans Path to Hope would fall into this category as would adult day care provided by Family Alliance. Food is provided as a voucher to Aldi and is a max of 2 \$25.00 vouchers for a single applicant and up to 1 additional voucher from each eligible person in the household.

**Veterans Emergency Assistance** is provided as permitted under state statutes. Per the Guide of Services Provided Rules and Eligibility Standard (Revised 2023), Veterans Emergency Assistance can be provided to applicants who are not eligible for Veterans General Assistance and fall below 250% of the poverty level. The granting of Emergency Assistance must resolve the financial issue which if not for the problem the applicant could otherwise manage. Recipients receiving Veterans Emergency Assistance can only

# Veterans Financial Assistance Programs

use the funds for rent, mortgage, or utilities in arrears. In the case of rent or mortgage, the assistance along with other social service agency commitments and the applicant's resources must bring the recipient current. Utilities need only be sufficient to avoid disconnection. Each recipient of Emergency Assistance is required to attend budgeting class at Consumer Credit Counseling. Additionally, should the applicant become eligible for Veterans General Assistance within 12 months of receiving Emergency Assistance, the Emergency Assistance is prorated monthly, and the resulting amount is subtracted from the Veterans General Assistance each month until 12 months had passed since receipt of Emergency Assistance.

The Veterans Assistance Commission also provides Veterans Disaster Assistance in cases where the applicant lost their housing due to a disaster not of their own causing, or the condition of the home presents a health hazard for the occupants. For example, if their apartment building burned down, or the home is plagued by bed bugs. The program requires that a recognized agency or professional verify the condition before the VAC can provide aid. The client's income is not a consideration for Veterans Disaster Assistance.

Assistance may be provided under this section if the Governor or President declares a disaster. Such assistance must be within 90 days of the declaration and pending an application for federal relief. Veterans Disaster Assistance granted in response to a declared disaster must be repaid to the VAC and follow all provisions under Illinois State Statutes, (305 ILCS 5/6-9 (a)(1) Through (c)(4))

In December 2017 a special category of Veterans Assistance was created at the request of the US Department of Veterans Affairs that would provide up to 3 weeks of housing assistance for homeless veterans who have been approved for the Housing and Urban Development - Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH). This allows our office to put a veteran and family in a motel while appropriate residence is identified by the VA and Housing Authority. The VA must provide the request in writing and the veteran must claim their residency within McHenry County. This was later extended to assist veterans waiting to get into Veterans Path to Hope New Horizons Transitional Facility.

Members of the National Guard or Reserve who served honorably but only have active duty for training may be eligible for Emergency Veterans Assistance or Disaster Veterans Assistance. Emergency Assistance is not specifically addressed in the Act but can be found in Article VI of the public aid code (305 ILCS 5/6-10).

**Caregiver Relief Veterans Assistance** is a pilot program that assists those caring for a veteran or surviving spouse by providing much needed time off. CRVA can be used for help with housekeeping, time off for the caregiver to go to appointments, or just have a break with friends. The VAC partners with Elderwerks, Senior Care Volunteer Network, and Senior Services to screen and identify the needs of CRVA clients. The requirements for CRVA are like that of other VAC financial programs except that the asset limits equal to the VA Pension income and asset limit, Social Security Retirement income is not considered, and an applicant can only qualify for the program once in any 91-day period. Additionally, CRVA can't be directly combined with other State funded Caregiver Relief programs. Applicants who are in receipt of in-home assistance from programs funded by the Department on Aging for instance, may only use CRVA funds to aid outside the home such as lawn care. CRVA is not a substitute for individuals who require skilled medical care and can only be paid to a licensed provider. Unlike other financial assistance programs, assistance limits are set by the Commission. The pilot period began December 2019 but due to COVID was extended through 2024.

**Updates to the Assistance Limits** – Assistance and income limits are determined by evaluating the overall average change in the Federal Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Level Guidelines, Housing and Urban Development average Fair Rent Values within McHenry County, the US Department of Agriculture's Thrifty food plan for a family of 4, and a snapshot of the cost for 12 gallons of gas at the most economical fuel

# Veterans Financial Assistance Programs

station within McHenry County. The updated figures are put into a spreadsheet and the entire table is updated within the program. After being approved by the Commission, the updated tables are sent to the VAC's software developer for updating.

During 2023 the VAC adopted the County of McHenry's new budget tracking program. The program which interfaces with the County's D365 financial system is much less cumbersome and makes it possible to efficiently reconcile our Financial Assistance Programs to what the Auditor has recorded. Over the course of 2023 the VAC had 111 specific requests for financial assistance of which 81 were granted

Internet services became a new line item in 2023 as more people use this as a significant form of communication, and their primary tool for searching for employment. A specific line item was created for the 2024 budget which should be part of the VAC's assistance computation software by the Spring.

The following tables detail the assistance granted.

<b>Division Actual vs Budget Monthly</b>					
Division 2210 - Client Services					
Budget Year 2023					
	<b>Main Accounts</b>	<b>December Actual</b>	<b>January Actual</b>	<b>February Actual</b>	<b>March Actual</b>
Expenses		\$ 1,193.52	\$ 1,019.06	\$ 2,748.89	\$ 3,863.37
	40 - Contractual	\$ 1,193.52	\$ 1,019.06	\$ 2,748.89	\$ 3,863.37
	400100 - Contractual Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420010 - Veterans Assistance Emergency Assistance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 864.00	\$ 2,270.33
	420020 - Veterans Assistance Shelter	\$ 623.75	\$ 465.46	\$ 782.48	\$ 1,045.27
	420025 - Veterans Assistance Independent Living	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420026 - Veterans Assistance Care Giver Relief	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420030 - Veterans Assistance Electric	\$ -	\$ 364.34	\$ 239.72	\$ 202.66
	420031 - Veterans Assistance Heating Fuel	\$ 287.07	\$ 136.41	\$ 726.47	\$ 345.11
	420032 - Veterans Assistance Telephone	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420033 - Veterans Assistance Trash	\$ -	\$ 52.85	\$ 5.54	\$ -
	420034 - Veterans Assistance Water/Sewer	\$ 282.70	\$ -	\$ 130.68	\$ -
	420035 - Veterans Assistance Internet Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420040 - Veterans Assistance Gasoline	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420041 - Veterans Assistance Transport	\$ 88.50	\$ -	\$ (24.11)	\$ -
	420045 - Veterans Assistance Food Vouchers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	424800 - Medical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Total 40 - Contractual	\$ 1,193.52	\$ 1,019.06	\$ 2,748.89	\$ 3,863.37
Total Expenses		\$ 1,193.52	\$ 1,019.06	\$ 2,748.89	\$ 3,863.37
<b>Month Net Total</b>		<b>\$ (1,193.52)</b>	<b>\$ (1,019.06)</b>	<b>\$ (2,748.89)</b>	<b>\$ (3,863.37)</b>

	<b>Main Accounts</b>	<b>April Actual</b>	<b>May Actual</b>	<b>June Actual</b>	<b>July Actual</b>
Expenses		\$ 1,683.49	\$ 3,082.75	\$ 3,741.72	\$ 5,152.09
	40 - Contractual	\$ 1,683.49	\$ 3,082.75	\$ 3,741.72	\$ 5,152.09
	400100 - Contractual Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420010 - Veterans Assistance Emergency Assistance	\$ 966.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420020 - Veterans Assistance Shelter	\$ 717.49	\$ 1,782.49	\$ 2,073.26	\$ 2,991.29
	420025 - Veterans Assistance Independent Living	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 906.34	\$ 1,143.00
	420026 - Veterans Assistance Care Giver Relief	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420030 - Veterans Assistance Electric	\$ -	\$ 45.28	\$ -	\$ 310.86
	420031 - Veterans Assistance Heating Fuel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32.55
	420032 - Veterans Assistance Telephone	\$ -	\$ 264.09	\$ 335.66	\$ 350.60
	420033 - Veterans Assistance Trash	\$ -	\$ 55.89	\$ -	\$ -
	420034 - Veterans Assistance Water/Sewer	\$ -	\$ 311.80	\$ 237.26	\$ 291.30
	420035 - Veterans Assistance Internet Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420040 - Veterans Assistance Gasoline	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -
	420041 - Veterans Assistance Transport	\$ 34.40	\$ 123.20	\$ 253.13	\$ 36.19
	420045 - Veterans Assistance Food Vouchers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 375.00	\$ -
	424800 - Medical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Total 40 - Contractual	\$ 1,683.49	\$ 3,082.75	\$ 3,741.72	\$ 5,152.09
Total Expenses		\$ 1,683.49	\$ 3,082.75	\$ 3,741.72	\$ 5,152.09
<b>Month Net Total</b>		<b>\$ (1,683.49)</b>	<b>\$ (3,082.75)</b>	<b>\$ (3,741.72)</b>	<b>\$ (5,152.09)</b>

# Veterans Financial Assistance Programs

In May of 2023 the Commission approved a budget for a new program which attempts to address the mental health crisis. Wellness programs expenditures began in August and are included in the financial assistance report. Specifics about the Veterans Wellness Program are highlighted elsewhere in this report.

	Main Accounts	August Actual	September Actual	October Actual	November Actual	Year to Date Actual
Expenses		\$ 2,328.94	\$ 3,887.94	\$ 3,536.99	\$ 6,019.40	\$ 38,258.16
	40 - Contractual	\$ 2,328.94	\$ 3,887.94	\$ 3,536.99	\$ 6,019.40	\$ 38,258.16
	400100 - Contractual Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	420010 - Veterans Assistance Emergency Assistance	\$ 759.00	\$ 423.00	\$ 1,380.00	\$ -	\$ 6,662.33
	420020 - Veterans Assistance Shelter	\$ 398.40	\$ 1,171.85	\$ 1,171.85	\$ 1,733.84	\$ 14,957.43
	420025 - Veterans Assistance Independent Living	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,049.34
	420026 - Veterans Assistance Care Giver Relief	\$ 434.21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 960.00	\$ 1,394.21
	420030 - Veterans Assistance Electric	\$ 210.00	\$ 853.81	\$ 355.84	\$ 538.44	\$ 3,120.95
	420031 - Veterans Assistance Heating Fuel	\$ 60.00	\$ 97.83	\$ 45.68	\$ 51.22	\$ 1,782.34
	420032 - Veterans Assistance Telephone	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 377.73	\$ 1,328.08
	420033 - Veterans Assistance Trash	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55.89	\$ 55.89	\$ 226.06
	420034 - Veterans Assistance Water/Sewer	\$ 91.98	\$ 431.17	\$ 784.30	\$ 1,402.28	\$ 3,963.47
	420035 - Veterans Assistance Internet Services	\$ -	\$ 510.43	\$ 859.57	\$ -	\$ 1,370.00
	420040 - Veterans Assistance Gasoline	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00
	420041 - Veterans Assistance Transport	\$ 30.03	\$ 91.60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 632.94
	420045 - Veterans Assistance Food Vouchers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 375.00
	424800 - Medical Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	480915 - Client Services – Veterans Wellness Education Program	\$ -	\$ 338.25	\$ -	\$ 900.00	\$ 1,238.25
	480920 - Client Services – Veterans Wellness Socialization	\$ 375.35	\$ -	\$ 263.86	\$ 1,097.49	\$ 1,736.70
	Total 40 - Contractual	\$ 2,328.94	\$ 3,887.94	\$ 3,536.99	\$ 7,116.89	\$ 39,355.65
Total Expenses		\$ 2,328.94	\$ 3,887.94	\$ 3,536.99	\$ 6,019.40	\$ 38,258.16
<b>Month Net Total</b>		<b>\$ (2,328.94)</b>	<b>\$ (3,887.94)</b>	<b>\$ (3,536.99)</b>	<b>\$ (6,019.40)</b>	<b>\$ (38,258.16)</b>

Note: Not listed is the expense of \$24,500 under Wellness Education which were instead listed under 400600 Training elsewhere in this report. The funds were used to train Mental Health First Aid Educators.

# 2023 VAC Transportation Service to the Lovell FHCC

The VAC has been providing some form of transportation service to the VA hospital in North Chicago since we opened the doors in December 1989. Initially the drivers were volunteers who used their own vehicles and were provided a stipend for mileage. Under Superintendent William Walters the VAC and the local Military Service Organizations raised enough funds to purchase a van. Since that time the VAC had hired drivers and provided regular service to North Chicago (Lovell FHCC). The Lovell FHCC is approximately 35 miles from Woodstock IL, with traffic getting heavier as a driver gets closer to North Chicago. Allowing the VAC to continue providing the transportation service helps protect the veteran who may otherwise be distracted by illness or disability. This lines up with the purpose of the program, which is to assist our veterans with getting to their medical appointments at the VA safely.



Over the last several years the VA had been increasing referrals to local care providers. Veterans no longer endure long wait times to see a specialist at Lovell FHCC but can be directed to local providers for specialty care. The VAC has been able to adapt to this change and assist our veterans with transportation to providers outside of the Lovell FHCC. This includes doctors who are contracted to provide VA Disability Claim exams.

The VAC picks up clients from designated bus stops within McHenry County. VAC Pick Up Points are in Woodstock from the Metra Station, McHenry at

the Green Street Parking lot and the VFW Post, and Crystal Lake at the Burger King on Route 14. Those patients who are unable to drive are provided transportation from Senior Service Associates out of McHenry, and Senior Care Volunteer Network out of Crystal Lake.

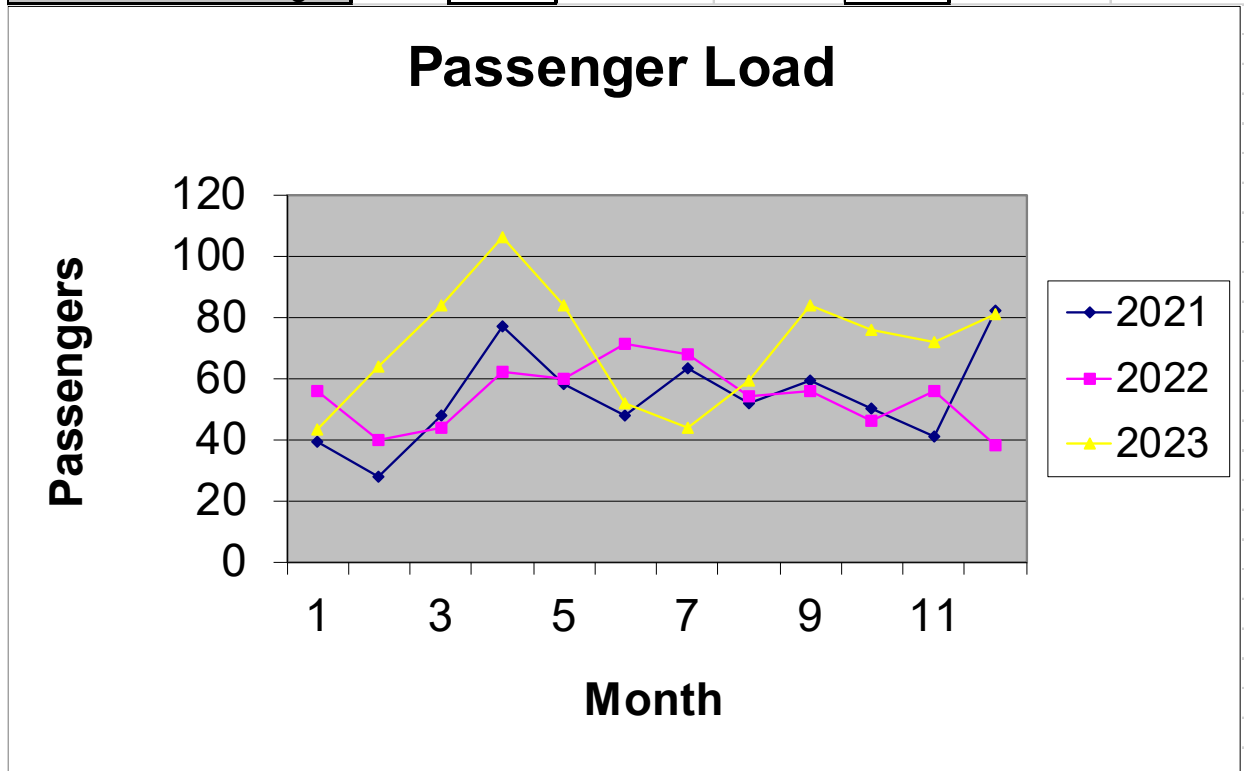
In addition to providing transportation to VA medical appointments, the VAC can also assist veterans with transportation to their VA Compensation and Pension examinations as requested by the VA Benefits Administration (VBA). VA Facilities frequently do not have the resources to provide Compensation and Pension examinations called for by the VBA in a timely manner. The VA had contracted with private firms to assist with locating and scheduling exams with qualified doctors who can provide the exams associated with VA Claims. It is not uncommon for these appointments to be scheduled at practices about 50 miles from the veteran's home. In many cases, the VAC Transportation Service is the only way the veteran can complete the exam.



# 2023 VAC Transportation Service to the Lovell FHCC

Over 2023 the VAC filled 849 transportation requests. Such requests were up about 63% over 2022. The following chart illustrates the month to month over three years.

Month	2021	2022	% Change 2021	Ave. % Change	2023	% Change 2022	Ave. % Change
December	39	56	43.6%	43.6%	43	-23.21%	-23.21%
January	28	40	42.9%	43.3%	64	60.00%	11.5%
February	48	44	-8.3%	21.7%	84	90.91%	76.2%
March	77	62	-19.5%	5.2%	106	70.97%	79.2%
April	58	60	3.4%	4.8%	84	40.00%	55.7%
May	48	71	47.9%	11.7%	52	-26.76%	0.0%
June	63	68	7.9%	11.1%	44	-35.29%	0.0%
July	52	54	3.8%	10.2%	59	9.26%	-15.6%
August	59	56	-5.1%	8.3%	84	50.00%	30.0%
September	50	46	-8.0%	6.7%	76	65.22%	56.9%
October	41	56	36.6%	8.9%	72	28.57%	45.1%
November	82	38	-53.7%	0.9%	81	113.16%	62.8%
Passengers	645	651			849		
Equal Time	563	613			849		
YTD Percent Capacity	10.5%	11.4%	Goal <70%		15.8%		
YTD Percent Change		8.88%			38.50%		



The VAC reports its transportation information to Pace Suburban Bus and the McHenry County Department of Transportation. A transportation appointment is defined as the transportation of a passenger from pick up to destination so a round trip to Lovell FHCC



# 2023 VAC Transportation Service to the Lovell FHCC

and back would be two appointments. All VAC drivers and safety sensitive staff are required to meet US Department of Transportation physical standards and be subject to random drug and alcohol testing.

In addition to transportation of veterans to the Lovell FHCC, the VAC assists its local Military Veterans Service Organizations with transporting groups to the FHCC for special events for inpatients and parades on Veterans and Patriotic holidays.

The below illustrates the cost of the program including the labor and administration costs to the VAC. Some of the fixed costs include the wages for the VAC Clerk, cost of vehicle lease, Workers Compensation Insurance, and a portion of the general liability insurance. The bus fund balance reflects community donations in support of the VAC's Transportation Service. The \$ per pax is an approximate cost to provide transportation per rider per trip. The cost to provide transportation using Uber or Taxi to the Lovell FHCC is over \$100.00.

Bus Riders/Mileage								
Month	Total Riders	Mileage	Per Diem	Veh. Exp	W Comp Insu	Office Admin	Total Cost	\$ per pax
December	43	1369	\$ 2,021.86	\$ 376.83	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 4,524.83	\$ 105.23
January	64	1890	\$ 1,154.99	\$ 1,292.49	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 4,573.63	\$ 71.46
February	84	2171	\$ 3,977.68	\$ 30.00	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 6,133.82	\$ 73.02
March	106	2674	\$ 6,172.29	\$ 683.58	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 8,982.02	\$ 84.74
April	84	1701	\$ 3,326.85	\$ 989.02	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 6,442.01	\$ 76.69
May	52	1465	\$ 2,450.96	\$ 675.41	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 5,252.52	\$ 101.01
June	44	1532	\$ 2,453.81	\$ 1,103.99	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 5,683.94	\$ 129.18
July	59	1906	\$ 2,436.74	\$ 706.51	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 5,269.39	\$ 89.31
August	84	2158	\$ 3,840.36	\$ 879.39	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 6,845.90	\$ 81.50
September	76	1979	\$ 2,171.96	\$ 554.62	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 4,852.72	\$ 63.85
October	72	2169	\$ 4,528.98	\$ 350.86	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 7,005.99	\$ 97.31
November	81	2568	\$ 4,422.54	\$ 1,511.27	\$ 509.26	\$ 1,392.55	\$ 8,059.95	\$ 99.51
Totals	849	23,582	\$ 38,959.03	\$ 9,153.97	\$ 6,111.11	\$ 16,710.60	\$ 73,626.71	\$ 86.72

# Veterans Wellness Programs

Veterans Wellness Programs are part of a two-year pilot separate from financial assistance in that the goal is to serve groups of veterans and their families rather than meeting the specific needs of a single veteran and family. Wellness programs are rehabilitative and intended to focus on socialization, communication, education, and/or family interaction. In addition to promoting the physical and mental well-being of our veterans, the goals of Veterans wellness programs include the following: reduced veterans' suicide and self-harm, reduce isolation, support intimate communication with family and others, expose veterans and family members to constructive coping activities, and educate veterans families and the public of mental health related issues suffered by some of our local veterans. Authorization to provide Veterans Wellness Programs falls under the IL Military Veterans Assistance Act 330 ILCS 45/9 (k) and the IL Public Aid Code 305 ILCS 5/9-2.

On May 17, 2023, the Commission voted to create the Wellness Program and established a budget. On June 21, 2023, the Commission adopted the guidelines for the program authorizing the VAC to start developing and implementing programs. The VAC partnered with Veterans Path to Hope (VPH) to assist with the development and implementation of the various programs. VPH was already working with something they called Veterans Outdoors and had a Wednesday group of veterans that met regularly and discussed issues. VAC Wellness Program Coordinators working with VPH, assisted with the expanding of those programs, and created others.

**Veterans Wellness Outdoors** – Outdoor projects are specific to natural environments (“Green Space”) and include but are not limited to hiking, cycling, rowing, boating, picnics, etc. There is growing evidence to suggest that exposure to natural environments can be associated with mental health benefits. Proximity to greenspace has been associated with lower levels of stress (Thompson et al., 2012) and reduced symptomology for depression and anxiety (Beyer et al., 2014), while interacting with nature can improve cognition for children with attention deficits (Taylor and Kuo, 2009) and individuals with depression (National Library of Medicine (The Great Outdoors? Exploring the Mental Health Benefits of Natural Environments)).

The Outdoors Coordinator has participated in weekly nature hikes with a few other veterans. This was limited to ideal weather and is expected to pick-up again as the outdoor temperatures improve. The VAC was also able to assist by providing food items for a



veteran kayaking program put on by VPH. Working with the IL Department of Natural Resources the VAC was able to establish guidelines for the creation of the Veterans Conservation Squad. This was to formally restore the Veterans Conservation Corps established by state statute and amended into a form that could no longer be supported.

# Veterans Wellness Programs

An additional Veterans Outdoor programs which the VAC sponsored or participated with included:

- **Veterans Build** – This was put together by Habitat for Humanity. VAC Staff, VPH Staff, each put together teams which included members of the community to work on veteran housing in McHenry and Hebron. Lunchtime presentations included the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Superintendent of the VAC.



- **Green Living Expo** – VAC and VPH staff had a booth and interacted with the public to introduce them to the Veterans Wellness program, specifically the Outdoors Program. This also falls under the Wellness Education as Veterans Service Officers are available to address any health or benefit related information based on specific questions from the public.
- **The Veterans Conservation Squad (VCS)** – Outdoors project whose volunteers participate in land restoration and construction projects of varying complexity (Bird Nesting Boxes to Shelters). The project is open to veterans and their direct family members. The Goal of the Veterans Conservation Squad is to aid in the improvement of our public open spaces for both people and wildlife. VCS missions are performed on public lands within the Northeastern Illinois area. Potential mission proposals are submitted to the VCS by the IL Dept of Natural Resources (DNR), Conservation District, Park District, or Forest Preserve. The VCS itself determines what missions it wishes to undertake. Materials and/or



funding needed to complete the mission should come from the requestor. Grants may be provided for VCS missions via the VACMC and VPH (and or another partnering agency) if VPS becomes a joint project.

• Pictured is a photo from 2018 of the former Veterans Conservation Corps building a covered kiosk. There is interest in restarting a similar program to include veteran families.

# Veterans Wellness Programs

**Veterans Wellness Education** – Typically, family members share the impact of the veteran's state of wellness. Wellness Education is a general concept that includes education and classroom activities aimed at providing information, resources, and tools helpful for veterans, and veteran family members to gain a better understanding of veteran wellness related issues as well as possible methods that can be used to address or cope with those issues.

Although most projects are targeting veterans and their direct family members, public wellness education would be projects open to the public.

**Veterans Wellness Education** is NOT a replacement for counseling but could be considered a supplement to individual or family therapy. The most impactful program in this category was a class the VAC provided for Mental Health



First Aid presented by certified instructors from the National Council for Mental Wellness. The 7½ hour course was provided to 26 students, mostly local veterans service organizations, employees of the VAC, Veterans Path to Hope, McHenry County Government, and the State of Illinois. A second course was provided to select individuals who desired to teach the course themselves to get this valuable information out to as many people as possible. The overall goal of Mental Health First Aid is, much like first aid and CPR, teach people to be able to respond to someone having a mental health crisis, and reduce the stigma of those who suffer from mental health conditions. Pictured are those students who passed the 3-day Mental Health First Aid Instructor training.

Other programs the VAC either sponsored or participated with under Veterans Wellness Education programs included:

- **VA Town Hall** – The director from the Lovell FHCC and representatives from the VA Benefits Administration presented to the public at McHenry County College. There were about 30 participants who focused questions primarily on VA disability claims and compensation and pension examinations.
- **Veterans Healthcare and Medicare Presentation** – The Woodstock Library and the Crystal Lake Library invited the VAC and a specialist in Medicare to co-present a program to the public. Information was to help veterans and their families understand services provided by VA Healthcare and Medicare options.
- **Johnny Appleseed Fest** – Johnny Appleseed Fest is an annual community program organized by the City of Crystal Lake. The Crystal Lake American Legion arranged for a large site for various veterans' service groups including the VAC, Veterans Path to Hope, She Force, and others to educate the public on the local veterans' community and services available.
- **Veteran Health Fair** – Partnering with Elderwerks in Palatine, the VAC sponsored a health fair for veterans and their families. Participating agencies included the Lovell FHCC who provided screenings, and the County Health Department who provided flu shots. Unfortunately, due to a surge in COVID infections, public attendance was less than expected.

# Veterans Wellness Programs

**Veterans Wellness Socialization** – Programs that address the issue of self-imposed isolation and promote the development of meaningful and intimate communication. Projects and outings can range from relatively unstructured such as a veterans' & family's picnic, to highly structured such as a veteran outing to a ballgame. The goal is to create an environment where participants can experience a sense of security outside their typical environment. Projects are typically veteran only unless the specific project states otherwise.

- **Veterans Game Night** – A video gaming program that brings veterans together with a common interest in a safe environment where staff is available to those playing. This was initially presented by the Crystal Lake American Legion as part of the Legion's 'Be the One' program, an effort to reduce the stigma of veterans' suicide and mental health issues. This represents a collaboration between the American Legion in Crystal Lake, Veterans Path to Hope, and the VAC. Gaming equipment has been provided by the American Legion Post. The first game night was held at Veterans Path to Hope. Another event was put together with the Crystal Lake American Legion and the Crystal Lake VFW at Emmanuel Church. Pictured was the Game Night event that was held at McHenry County College that was also supported by the Student Veterans of America. The MCC Game Night had the largest response with 57 registrants ranging in age from 7-78.



- **Wednesday Night Group Dinners** – The Group dinners are held at the Veterans Path to Hope in Crystal Lake. A special dinner is funded monthly to encourage more participation. Four such dinners sponsored by the VAC took place over 2023. Each such dinner saw an increase in the number of veterans participating. The overall goal is to create a safe and comfortable environment for veterans to discuss their concerns and have access to a Veterans Service Officer.

After seeing the preliminary report from the Center for Disease Control it was evident that if society hopes to have an impact on the growing mental health concerns being faced in this country, especially among our military veterans, organizations will have to provide services differently. Bringing veterans together as a group sharing a common interest reduces isolation and encourages communication among persons with shared experiences. Thanks to VPH for allowing the VAC to partner with them on some of their existing programs and working with the VAC on new programs.

# VAC 2023 Unaudited Budget and Expenditures

The following information is available on the McHenry County Website

**Division 2200 Administration** – The costs associated with day-to-day operations of the office including the administration of client services.

**Division 2210 – Client Services** – Financial Assistance and specific client service costs paid to outside vendors. Reported in Financial Assistance section of this report.

## VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND

Revenues	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Auditor	FY 2024 Budgeted
Tax Revenue (Tax Levy)	325,000	427,023	424,235	548982	660,000
Utilization of Reserve Fund	102,314	3,649	16,702	0	405,414
Intergovernmental Grant / Transfer	0	0	200,000*	0	(40,000)
Interest Income	0	0	0	1,242	7,100
<b>Total Department/Fund</b>	<b>\$427,314</b>	<b>\$430,672</b>	<b>\$440,973</b>	<b>\$994,745</b>	<b>1,032,514</b>
<b>Expenditures Personnel Services</b>	<b>348,049</b>	<b>359,017</b>	<b>373,997</b>	<b>492,487</b>	<b>649,314</b>
<b>Contractual Services</b>	<b>75,252</b>	<b>63,764</b>	<b>55,377</b>	<b>115,606</b>	<b>325,500</b>
<b>Commodities</b>	<b>4,013</b>	<b>7,891</b>	<b>11,563</b>	<b>31,242</b>	<b>52,600</b>
<b>Capital Outlay / Fund Balance</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>7,100.00</b>
<b>Total Department/Fund</b>	<b>\$427,314</b>	<b>\$427,930</b>	<b>\$440,973</b>	<b>\$994,745</b>	<b>1,032,514</b>

**Intergovernmental Transfer** – A representative value of common administrative services provided to the VAC by McHenry County Government. Professional services such as Information Technology, Human Resources, Government Auditing, Purchasing, etc. provided by McHenry County Government represent a considerable savings to the VAC. Although not mandated by law, the Commission choose to recognize these services provided in an intergovernmental agreement which determines a value based upon a mutually agreed upon formula.

## Reserve Fund Goal is 5 Months

Veterans Assistance Commission	2021	2022	2023
<b>Reserve Account (Beginning of Year)</b>	\$195,918	\$177,422	\$160,720
<b>Months Reserve*</b>	5.49	4.84	1.94

The Veterans Assistance Commission has long held to maintaining a reserve as a hedge against economic change to allow the Commission to continue providing service without having to request additional tax funds.

Tax Levy by Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Veterans' Assistance</b>	0.006	0.000	0.005	0.004	0.005	0.003	0.005	0.005

Rates are per \$100 of assessed value, statute is .02% per 305 ILCS 5/12-21.

- \* The \$200,000 was from Covid Relief funds provided to the County of McHenry. The funds were used to convert much of the VAC software, worksheets, and forms and making it available to staff from a Cloud based platform. This will help the VAC with providing services from a remote location.

# VAC 2023 Unaudited Budget and Expenditures

## Division Actual vs Budget Monthly

Division 2200 - Administration  
Budget Year 2023

Main Accounts	Year to Date	
	Actual	Budget
<b>Revenues</b>		
70 - Property Taxes		
070000 - Property Taxes	\$ 548,982.23	
Total 70 - Property Taxes	\$ 548,982.23	\$ 550,000.00
95 - Interest Earnings		
095000 - Interest Income Bank Accts	\$ 1,235.72	\$ -
095010 - Real Estate Tax Distribution Interest	\$ 120.73	\$ -
Total 95 - Interest Earnings	\$ 1,242.20	
96 - Misc. Income		
096310 - Donations (Bus Fund)	\$ 1,826.00	\$ -
Total 96 - Misc. Income	\$ 1,826.00	\$ -
91 - Utilization of Fund Balance		
099100 - Utilization of Fund Balance	\$ 47,646.50	\$ 417,790.00
Total 91 - Utilization of Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ 417,790.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 550,224.43</b>	<b>\$ 967,790.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
30 - Personnel		
301010 - Regular Salaries Non Union	\$ 392,863.75	\$ 394,709.00
302010 - Part Time Salaries Non Union	\$ 1,089.94	\$ -
302510 - Holiday Pay Non Union	\$ 17,469.27	\$ -
303000 - Per Diems	\$ 34,520.53	\$ 46,932.00
304010 - Overtime Salaries Non Union	\$ 250.44	\$ 4,000.00
305010 - Merit Pool Non Union	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
306510 - Sick Leave Buy Back Non Union	\$ 1,842.45	\$ 1,750.00
308500 - Uniform Allowance	\$ -	\$ 600.00
310510 - Soc Sec Medicare/Cnty Contrib. Non Union	\$ 34,274.78	\$ 33,785.00
310610 - Medicare/Cnty Contribution Non Union	\$ -	\$ -
311010 - IL Municipal Retirement Non Union	\$ 24,996.37	\$ 24,544.00
314610 - Health Insurance/Cnty Contrib. Non Union	\$ 34,121.34	\$ 84,870.00
Total 30 - Personnel	\$ 492,487.33	\$ 611,190.00
40 - Contractual		
400100 - Contractual Services	\$ 2,560.00	\$ 12,800.00
400500 - Association Dues/Memberships	\$ 1,034.00	\$ 2,200.00
400600 - Training	\$ 29,404.00	\$ 6,000.00
400800 - Subscriptions	\$ 208.00	\$ 500.00
400820 - Professional Journals	\$ -	\$ 500.00
402300 - Professional Services	\$ 3,585.00	\$ -
403010 - Business Ins. Specific Insurance	\$ 2,688.00	\$ -
403034 - Business Ins. Specific Insurance	\$ 7,404.00	\$ -
403035 - Business Ins. Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$ -
403045 - Business Ins. InHouse Workers Compensation	\$ -	\$ 11,000.00
403050 - Business Ins. Directors Liability	\$ 6,065.00	\$ 6,000.00
405500 - Contractual Printing	\$ 1,721.77	\$ 2,500.00
406000 - Legal Notices & Advertising	\$ 8,973.00	\$ 9,000.00
406020 - Directory Advertising	\$ 545.02	\$ -
409600 - Telecommunications	\$ -	\$ -
409620 - Cellular Phone Service	\$ 3,264.59	\$ 1,500.00
410110 - Rental Agreements	\$ -	\$ -
420040 - Veterans Assistance Gasoline	\$ -	\$ -
420041 - Veterans Assistance Transport	\$ 226.45	\$ -
420045 - Veterans Assistance Food Vouchers	\$ 375.00	\$ -
424800 - Medical Services	\$ 965.00	\$ 1,000.00
430600 - Repair & Maint. Vehicles	\$ 2,469.27	\$ 7,500.00
432100 - Computer Software Support & Maintenance	\$ 2,922.99	\$ 4,000.00
437000 - Legal Services	\$ 1,556.69	\$ 40,000.00
458000 - Exhumation & Burial Expense	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00
Total 40 - Contractual	\$ 75,967.78	\$ 107,500.00
50 - Commodities		
501000 - Office Supplies	\$ 508.61	\$ 1,300.00
501010 - Promotional Items	\$ 7,470.15	\$ 2,500.00
503000 - Postage	\$ -	\$ -
504000 - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 1,849.03	\$ 5,000.00
505000 - Meeting Expense	\$ 130.00	\$ 3,500.00
505010 - Meeting Expense Meal Reimbursement	\$ 3,339.40	\$ 2,000.00
505020 - Meeting Expense Hotel Reimbursement	\$ 6,369.97	\$ 8,500.00
505035 - Meeting Expense Airfare	\$ 413.80	\$ 2,000.00
505040 - Meeting Expenses Travel Bus/Taxi/Train/Parking/Tolls	\$ 194.48	\$ 1,000.00
507000 - Miscellaneous Supplies	\$ 617.87	\$ 1,200.00
509900 - Miscellaneous Commodities	\$ -	\$ -
511400 - Office Equipment < \$5,000	\$ 2,251.04	\$ 4,000.00
511500 - Computer Components < \$5,000	\$ 5,661.90	\$ -
512000 - Computer Software < \$5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,500.00
516000 - Fuel, Oil, and Grease	\$ 3,631.60	\$ 7,000.00
517010 - Food Drinking Water	\$ 168.00	\$ 100.00
521000 - Publications (Books, Manuals)	\$ -	\$ 500.00
525100 - Promotional Events	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 5,000.00
Total 50 - Commodities	\$ 31,241.82	\$ 49,100.00
68 - Fund Balance Enhancement		
681000 - Fund Balance Enhancement	\$ -	\$ -
Total 68 - Fund Balance Enhancement	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 599,696.93</b>	<b>\$ 767,790.00</b>

## McHenry County Military Veteran Service Organizations

Organization Name	Address	Meeting Location
American Legion Post #1231	1101 W Algonquin Rd. Lake In The Hills, IL 60156	3rd Mon 7:30pm at the Post
American Legion Post #171	PO Box 1713 Crystal Lake, IL 60039	3rd Mon 7:30pm 406 W Woodstock St Crystal Lake IL 60014
American Legion Post #192	P.O. Box 192 Marengo, IL 60152	3rd Mon 7:00pm Marengo Park District 825 Indian Oaks Trail Marengo IL 60152
American Legion Post #253	PO Box 14 Richmond, IL 60071	3rd Thur 7:00pm Nippersink Library 5418 Hill Road Richmond IL 60071
American Legion Post #265	PO Box 36 Harvard, IL 60033	2nd Tue 7:00pm Sportsman's Club 21226 US Route 14 Harvard IL 60033
American Legion Post #276	404 Crest Dr. Cary, IL 60013	2nd Mon 7:30pm Algonquin Township Bldg 3702 US 14 Crystal Lake IL 60014
American Legion Post #412	P.O. Box 162 Woodstock, IL 60098	2nd Mon 6:00pm Dorr Township 1039 Lake Avenue Woodstock IL 60098
American Legion Post #491	P.O. Box 447 McHenry, IL 60050	2nd Mon 7:30pm 1331 N Riverside Dr McHenry IL 60050
American Legion Post #606	P.O. Box 36 Hebron, IL 60034	3rd Mon 7:00pm United Methodist Church 9811 Main St. Hebron IL 60034
American Legion Post #673	P.O. Box 389 Huntley, IL 60142	3rd Thur 7:30pm 11712 W Coral St Huntley IL 60142
AmVets Post #245	P.O. Box 741 Cary, IL 60013	2nd Monday 7:00pm 3702 US Hwy 14 Crystal Lake IL 60014
Marine Corps League	PO Box 311 Woodstock, IL 60098	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday 7:00pm McHenry VFW 3002 W. IL Route 120 McHenry IL
Military Order of the Cooties	3002 West Route 120 McHenry, IL 60050	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday 7:00pm at the Post
Polish Legion of American Veterans #188	1304 North Park St. McHenry, IL 60050	4 Sunday 10:00am at the Post
Student Veterans of America (Participating Member)	McHenry County College 8900 US Route 14 Crystal Lake, IL 60012	
VFW Post #11496	2315 Church Street Suite A Johnsburg, IL 60051	2nd Tue 7:00pm 3960 N Johnsburg Rd. Johnsburg IL 60051
VFW Post #12014	PO Box 446 Crystal Lake, IL 60039	4th Wed 7:00pm 5689 NW Highway Crystal Lake, IL 60014
VFW Post #4600	3002 West Route 120 McHenry, IL 60050	1st Mon 7:30pm at the Post
VFW Post #5040	240 N Throop St Woodstock IL, 60098	3rd Mon 7:00pm at the Post



# VAC Partners

The Veterans Assistance Commission embraces its relationships with other agencies to provide the best possible services to our veterans' community. The VAC focuses on veterans' financial assistance, transportation, and veterans claim representation. Becoming experts in those fields made the VAC of McHenry County the go-to referral for most of our local social service agencies. This approach led to developing partnerships with organizations that are also experts in their fields. Thanks to these partnerships our veteran families are exposed to very useful resources to assist them to become as independent as possible. We introduce some of our agency partners who work to help make our community better.

**Our Military Service Organizations** – Most of the Posts in McHenry County are active in their support of the Veterans Assistance Commission. The Posts have embraced their role overseeing the VAC and acting as a true board of directors providing direction to the Commission and identifying needs in the community. Post members have volunteered at the Lovell FHCC, provided social activities for hospitalized veterans, participated in fundraising activities for the VAC Inc., and reached out to elected officials in support of the VAC. Some of the Post's also get involved with providing help to needy veterans' families, assistance with home repairs, visits to hospitalized veterans, gift boxes to needy families over the holidays, and so much more.

**The VAC Inc.** – The VAC Inc. is the corporate arm of the VAC. They have a separate fund available to assist veterans with emergency services such as car repairs or home appliance repair. This fund addresses a need that is not covered by the assistance guidelines. The corporate arm of the Commission is working on becoming a 501-3c instead of a 501-c19.

**James A. Lovell FHCC** – The VAC actively works with the FHCC's Homeless Veterans Center to successfully house and provide services for this vulnerable community. The VAC and Lovell FHCC are both important members of the Continuum of Care, and the Built for Zero. The Built for Zero Collaborative is a movement to actively house the chronically homeless. The VAC has an agreement with the Homeless Drop In Center at Lovell to temporarily house homeless veterans from McHenry County at one of our local motels. The VAC can assist while arrangements are being made for permanent or transitional housing.

**Veterans Path to Hope VPH** – While several organizations advertise transitional services for veterans, Veterans Path to Hope delivers. In addition to a homeless transition program at their New Horizons facility, Veterans Path to Hope offers a drop in center with peer to peer counseling, nutrition support, Rapid rehousing and supportive housing for homeless veterans, furniture for veterans moving into permanent housing, outdoor activities for veterans, and employment services. Sometime in 2023 the VAC hopes to have a VSO work regularly out of the VPH offices.

**Senior Care Volunteer Network** – SCVN partners with the VAC to help some of our transportation clients get to the VAC bus stops. SCVN volunteers pick up our veterans from their home and take them back after they return from their medical appointments at the Lovell FHCC. Senior Care Volunteer Network also has a free medical equipment sharing program where our clients can get good condition medical appliances such as a walker or wheelchair. SCVN is also helping the VAC get the word out about the Caregiver Relief Veterans Assistance program.

**Elderwerks** – Too often our veteran families have nowhere to turn after a medical emergency requiring placement in assisted living or skilled care. Elderwerks assists our veteran families identify facilities specifically appropriate for the family's loved one. Additionally, Elderwerks provides education opportunities for other advocacy groups covering topics important to today's senior community. They also run the annual Senior Fair in McHenry County, and evaluate clients need for the VAC's caregiver relief program.

**Senior Service Associates** – Senior Services assists with transportation to the VAC bus stops for those veterans with appointments at the Lovell FHCC. They also offer information and assistance to our senior veterans to match care and programs suited for their specific need.

# VAC Partners

**Patriot Run Committee** – The Patriot Run was developed to raise monies for local veterans' programs. The program organizes a 5K run at McHenry County College and most of the proceeds support programs run by the VAC, Veterans Path to Hope, and the Student Veterans of America.

**American Veterans Help Corps** – AVHC is a fund-raising charity that supports local veterans' programs. Thanks to their support the VAC was able to assist several veterans with necessary automobile repairs, as well as assisting veterans with emergency home appliance repairs.

**McHenry County Community Foundation** – MCCF continues to assist the VAC Inc with its scholarship fund. Earnings from monies donated to the fund are used to provide scholarships to the children and grandchildren of local post members and veterans. MCCF will also be assisting the VAC with an upcoming Stakeholders meeting to take place at their facility in Crystal Lake sometime in the Spring of 2024.

**Veterans Benefits Administration** – The VBA provides our VSO's with direct access to client records electronically. Thanks to this access our office is able to monitor the progress of client claims and intercept problems. Additionally, the access provided the VAC with VA Learning, a platform that has in depth courses related to veterans' services, VA regulations, and security.

**Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions** – The IACVAC is a professional organization where VAC's throughout the State can share concerns and solutions. The Association has an emphasis on professional development so its members can better advocate for their veteran clients. Additionally, the IACVAC provides an annual continuing education program that attracts Veterans Service Officers not only from VAC's but offices outside the State. The State Association is also working on a VAC Office Certification program to reward those VAC Office's who meet the associations professional standards.

**The Knights of Columbus** – A charitable organization affiliated with the Catholic Church. Each year the Knights assist with holiday meal boxes for those low-income veteran families in McHenry County. Additionally, they have provided direct assistance to at needy families who do not qualify for veterans' assistance.

**McHenry County Government** – There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to running a government office. McHenry County Government leaders continue to support the VAC with multiple services such as information technology, human resource functions, auditing, etc..

**Veterans Path to Hope** – VPH is a 501 (c-3) that provides a variety of services to the veteran's community in the northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin area. Among the programs not previously covered in this report include a veterans food pantry, Homeless Veterans Reintegration, the New Horizons transitional facility, Veterans Drop-In center, veterans and family counseling, and more! The VAC has been proud to partner with VPH for over 20 years.

The VAC does not work alone to address all the needs of our veteran's community. By partnering with experts in a variety of fields the VAC is able to ensure that our local community is connected to valuable services that directly impact their specific needs.

# Veterans Assistance Commission of McHenry County

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Visit Us on **Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/mchenrycountyvac>

Visit Our Web Page within the  
McHenry County Government site

<https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/vac>



The Veterans Assistance Commission meets the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Wednesday of each month (except December) at 5:00pm.  
Visit our website for meeting details

Meetings are open to the public:  
McHenry County Government Center – Admin Bldg  
667 Ware Road  
Woodstock IL 60098