

Veterans Helping Veterans

2018 ANNUAL REPORT AND DIRECTORY



**California Association of County
Veterans Service Officers, Inc.**

Professional Veterans Advocates Serving
California's Veterans and their Families



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myCalVet provides Veterans and their families the opportunity to create a customized profile which targets the benefits, resources, and services available in their community and throughout the State.

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OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR 2017

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers has made great strides in 2017 in helping our veteran population get connected with compensation and pension benefits, as well as medical care, housing and, in some cases, employment. Among our biggest accomplishments was filing claims that generated over \$924 million in new federal benefits to our veterans and their dependents since FY 2015-16. In addition, the driver's license initiative continued to drive veterans into our offices, where our CVSOs helped get them every benefit for which they were eligible and, of course, very deserving — through their military service. And, in response to one of our ongoing challenges — maintaining our high quality of service — the Association initiated a training and mentoring program, where experienced CVSOs mentor newer hires and provide ongoing information. We can look forward to even more progress next year, with Scott Holwell from King's County taking over as Association President. Best of luck to him and the entire 2018 leadership team.

Ted Puntillo, President, CACVSO (February 2016 — February 2018)
Solano County CVSO

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is a true honor and privilege to be assuming the watch as President of the CACVSO in February 2018. I am humbled to be surrounded by the high-caliber veterans service professionals of CACVSO, CalVet and our numerous other partners — with whom we share the sacred duty of serving California's 1.7 million veterans. I look forward to continued, successful collaboration with CalVet, the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO), the California State Commanders Veterans Council (CSCVC), as well as the various veterans service organizations and veterans they represent. I am also blessed to continue working with Jack Kirwan on state law and regulatory issues, and our new legislative advocate, Seth Reeb. I am also excited to have Nathan Johnson from Contra Costa County and Ruth Wong from Los Angeles County as part of our leadership triad. I am committed to improving the quality of life for our veterans, through providing continued professional services, new-CVSO training/mentoring opportunities and strong legislative advocacy. Thank you to Ted Puntillo for your leadership and experience, and a special salute to our recently-retired, long-time legislative advocate, Pete Conaty.

Scott Holwell, President (February 2018 — February 2019)
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers

WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS?

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) oversees and directs the activities of their individual County Veterans Service Offices (CVSOs) — in 56 of California’s 58 counties — where veterans and their families receive free United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) claims assistance for federal benefits, and information and referral to local, state and federal programs.

The CACVSO:

- ★ provides members of the Association and their staff with a collaborative network of resources, information and ideas — especially in the sharing of information on the many difficult federal claims issues,
- ★ provides training and education to CVSOs and their employees,
- ★ promotes the mission of CVSOs throughout the state, and
- ★ promotes the welfare and rights of veterans statewide through legislative advocacy.

The CACVSO provides members of the Association and their staff with a collaborative network of resources, information and ideas — especially in the sharing of information on the many difficult federal claims issues.

THE HISTORY OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

Shortly after the Civil War, veterans began to organize by forming the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), which advocated for government benefits for their comrades who were physically or mentally injured as a result of their wartime service. Since then, other veterans’ service organizations were formed after each of America’s wars, such as the American Legion, AMVETS, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, as well as others.

These veterans’ service organizations advocate at the state and county level to help veterans and their families, as well as for current active duty and reserve military members. After each war, more states and counties responded by establishing commissions, boards and committees to assist their veterans.

After the WWI, some states established a system known as County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO). The CVSO system is the most widely used model by states to deliver services and to assist veterans in obtaining federal and state benefits.



The first CVSO in California was established in Stanislaus County in 1924, followed by the counties of San Bernardino (1926), Riverside (1930), Ventura (1931) and San Diego (1933), to serve California's mostly World War I veterans, as well as veterans from the Spanish-American War.

With the end of World War II, practically every county in California established a county veterans service office. This led to the formation of the CACVSO in 1945. The CACVSO celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2015.

State law does not mandate that counties establish county veterans service officers. Counties have done so to help their veterans and they fund 82% of the cost, even with the increased funding.

The CVSO system is the most widely used model by states to deliver services and to assist veterans in obtaining federal and state benefits.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

In September 1989, the CACVSO became a founding member of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO), along with CVSOs from seven other states. The NACVSO is a 2,400-member association, which includes 28 states and one Tribal Nation.



Ventura County Veterans Service staff.



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 26, 2018

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COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS BRING IN OVER \$436 MILLION IN NEW FEDERAL VETERANS BENEFITS TO CALIFORNIA!

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) announced today that during fiscal year 2016-17, they assisted California's veterans in filing claims with the federal government which resulted in a minimum of \$436,488,924 according to recently released figures from CalVet (California Department of Veterans Affairs).

According to CACVSO President Ted Puntillo "It is important to note that of the \$436 million in new federal benefits awarded to California veterans last year, over \$265 million of that will be paid out annually to the qualifying veterans for the rest of their lives."

Many of California's 1.7 million veterans are eligible for benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). However, determining which benefits and programs they may be eligible for, as well as applying and qualifying for these benefits is very complicated. CVSO's are county employees whose job is to assist veterans in obtaining their earned federal benefits. The services CVSO's provide are free to veterans and their families. The majority of CVSO funding is provided by the counties (82%); while the remainder comes from the state's General Fund (13%) and various state budgetary pass-throughs from other funds (5%).

Local governments and the State of California have long realized that assisting veterans in obtaining the federal benefits they earned as a result of their military service reduces the pressures on already impacted local and state social service programs. Also, since these federal veterans benefits go directly from the VA to the veteran, these new federal monies are also a boost to the local economies, as well as helping veterans.

The current cost of operating the CVSO's is approximately \$41.3 million. CVSO's are responsible for bringing in over \$436 million in new federal monies for California's veterans. Therefore, CVSO's by guiding the state's veterans to the appropriate federal benefits, are saving the state money by lessening cost pressures on state and local programs, and getting over a 10-fold return on investment. This does not take into account the economic multiplier effect of an added \$436 million in federal monies going into local economies, as the veterans who are the direct beneficiaries of these monetary benefits, spend it in on everyday items such as rent, food, and medicine.

Beginning in late 2015 California veterans were to apply to the DMV for a "VETERAN" designation on the their driver's license. To qualify for this designation, it is required that the veteran visit a CVSO to verify their veteran status. This visit also allows the CVSO to ascertain if the veteran is eligible for any federal benefits. In the last 26 months, over 64,000 veterans seeking the designation made appointments with their CVSO. Upon review of their military records it was found that many of the veterans were eligible for annual benefit payments (\$31 million) and some were eligible for retroactive benefits (\$17 million). "This shows that there is a large number of veterans out there who are not aware that they may be eligible for these benefits and it is our goal to reach as many of them as possible and assist them," noted Scott Holwell, incoming CACVSO President for 2018.

ABOUT THE CACVSO:

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) is a professional training and legislative organization comprising the 56 counties, which have established 54 County Veterans Service Officers throughout the state, dedicated to serving California's 1.7 million veterans as well as their dependents and survivors. More information about the CACVSO can be accessed at: <http://www.cacvso.org/>.

The CACVSO 2018 Annual Report can be accessed at: <http://www.cacvso.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/CVSO-2017-Annual-Report.pdf>

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WHAT CVSOS DO FOR CALIFORNIA VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

While California's County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) bring a great deal of additional federal funding to the state every year, pure numbers can't quantify the value of what we do. There is a real human value to the services we provide, which is seen and felt by the California veterans and families we help. Here are some of their stories:

CVSO partners with police to help homeless veteran

Due to physical or psychological disabilities or lack of transportation, veterans can't always make it to a CVSO office. To help overcome some of these barriers, the Stanislaus CVSO, in partnership with the Modesto Police Department's Homeless Engagement and Response Team, has been able to assist homeless veterans access their benefits. Veterans Service Representative Jose Garcia helped a veteran file for his veteran's pension. Because the veteran had no mailing address, Jose arranged for all VA correspondence to the veteran to be sent to his office so that he could track his claim and upcoming appointments. The veteran now receives an ongoing monthly monetary benefit from the VA. (Stanislaus County)

Military Reservists Program improves reservist and employer relations

The Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) has a Military Reservists Program, which benefits and protects reservists working for LA County. The federal policies and laws that protect reservists when they take time from their jobs to train, drill, and serve with one of the military's reserve components are known as the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). These laws can be confusing and complex for both the reservist and the employer. LA County, as one of the largest counties in the nation, has tasked DMVA employee Dimitri de Silva as military leave coordinator to educate and advocate on behalf of county employees who are reservists. He serves as the liaison between reservists and their respective departments to ensure that not only are reservists educated in county, state, and federal laws, but that LA's county departments are properly implementing these policies. To date, the DMVA has educated over 800 reservists on USERRA and county benefits, as well as resolved 780 cases. For his work, Mr. de Silva was presented with the Patriotic Employer Award by the Department of Defense's Employment Support of the Guard and Reserve program. (Los Angeles County)



CVSO assists veteran's appeal to VA on benefits decision

A veteran in Santa Clara County received a decision from the VA regarding their request for benefits, which the veteran felt was incorrect. The veteran himself filed a Notice of Disagreement (NOD) with the VA with no supporting documentation. As a result, the NOD had been stagnant since early 2015. The CVSO staff met with the veteran and his spouse and gathered all of the needed documentation and evidence. They provided them with the correct paperwork, developed an explanation and timeline, requested the NOD be expedited, and re-submitted it to the VA. Four months later, the veteran received a full grant of benefits with a retroactive payment of over \$402,000 and a monthly payment rate of over \$7,500. (Santa Clara County)

Helping veterans break the cycle of recidivism

In partnership with the local Community Corrections Partnership, the Kern County CVSO office was granted \$120,000 for a pilot program that transfers responsibility for supervising certain parolees from state parole agents to county probation officers. The program funding allows the CVSO office to perform outreach to incarcerated veterans in the County Jail. Veteran Service Manager Josh Dhanens and his staff were instrumental in implementing the program, and worked with the Probation Department and Kern County Behavioral and Recovery Services to connect veterans who came into the justice system with the resources and claims assistance they may be eligible for by virtue of their service. The goal is to break the cycle of recidivism for incarcerated veterans. (Kern County)

Property tax relief for veteran's widow

A 92-year-old surviving spouse of a veteran whose husband's death was service connected did not know that she could get her property taxes modified due to her husband's service. The CVSO assisted her with applying for the benefit and her tax bill was reduced from \$900 to \$100. The widow also received an \$8,000 credit for the back taxes she had overpaid. (Placer County)

World War I veteran receives final benefit after 99 years

At an American Legion Post 439 meeting, Post Commander Dennis Cook learned that there was a World War I veteran with an unmarked grave at a cemetery in Truckee. Endeavoring to get the veteran a military headstone, he partnered with Chaun Mortier of the Truckee Donner Historical Society and the Nevada County CVSO office to gather the muster roles and the obituary from the newspaper, which stated he received an honorable discharge from the Marines. Joseph Dugan was discharged in 1918 after serving for four years. Shortly after



his discharge, he died of pneumonia and since he had no known relatives, was buried in an unmarked grave. The CVSO submitted the claim in November and the cemetery took possession of Mr. Dugan's military headstone in December. There will be a formal military graveside ceremony in 2018, almost 100 years after his passing. This is a great example of the close relationship between CVSOs, veterans service organizations, and the community, all working together to help veterans. (Nevada County)

Veteran visits CVSO to verify discharge status and receives benefits for Agent Orange exposure

A veteran visited the Solano CVSO office to be verified of his veteran status for purposes of obtaining the veteran designation on the driver's license. Upon seeing the veteran's DD-214 discharge document, the CVSO noticed he was an Army Vietnam veteran and asked him if he had diabetes or heart problems. The veteran replied that he did have diabetes and had a 5-way bypass for ischemic heart disease. The CVSO knew that these conditions were presumed by the VA to be caused by Agent Orange exposure from service in Vietnam. The CVSO filed a claim and the veteran who had previously been living on \$1,250 a month from Social Security now receives \$3,200 a month from the VA. The veteran also received a \$22,000 retroactive payment. Prior to applying for his veteran designation on his driver's license, he did not know about the benefits for which he was eligible. (Solano County)



Amador county veterans celebrate new road sign on Highway 49. From left to right: Terry Sanders, Amador CVSO, USN Ret.; George Tyler, US Air Force, Vietnam Veteran; Shannon Scott, Purple Heart Recipient, USMC, Vietnam; Sidney Scott, son of Shannon, US Army 2 deployments to Afghanistan.

Working with CVSO, homeless veteran qualifies for permanent rental assistance

To prove status as a veteran, a Department of Defense form DD-214 discharge document is needed. This verification of service is required for many benefits, including the veteran designation on a driver's license, VA housing loans, health benefits, and other compensation from federal, state, and local programs. Each county offers veterans a place to record, store, and retrieve a certified copy of their DD-214 document free of charge, however many veterans are not aware of this service. The Contra Costa County CVSO office partners with the with the Clerk-Recorder, Assessor, Tax Collector, and Human Resources offices to put on "Operation Documentation" to assist veterans with this process. This event is well attended and in the process of recording these documents, veterans are made aware of any benefits that they may be made eligible for. As a result of this awareness, the CVSO office experienced its second busiest day in its history. Over 93 veterans and their families were assisted. (Contra Costa County)

WHY USE PUBLIC FUNDS TO SUPPORT CVSO OPERATIONS?

- Formal studies prove veterans receive more benefits and larger awards by using professional Veterans Service Representatives (i.e. CVSOs) than if they file individually or with a non-professional.
- Unlike other federal benefits, veteran benefits are extremely individualized — entirely dependent on that individual's service experience — CVSOs have the experience to draw out the nuances in that individual's experience to validate the claim.
- Through direct involvement in programs such as veteran treatment courts, MediCal cost avoidance and homeless Stand Downs, CVSOs reduce state costs by connecting veterans to alternative services.
- CVSOs know local services and how to access those services — they can get a homeless vet a bed, tonight, in a shelter just down the street; or a stressed out vet into mental health services, locally, right now, not in a couple of weeks.
- The CVSO model epitomizes Governor Brown's belief that governmental activities should be as local as possible.
- For every dollar of state general fund support provided in fiscal year 2016-17, the CVSO community brought in \$78 in new federal benefits.
- The CVSO sits across the table from the veteran — eyeball to eyeball — and the veteran recognizes the simpatico relationship and is able to openly discuss their case, allowing the CVSO to present a fully developed claim.
- The veteran has a real person to hold responsible for the claims process — not some anonymous voice at the other end of a 1-800 call.

The veteran has a real person to hold responsible for the claims process — not some anonymous voice at the other end of a 1-800 call.

Assemblyman James Gallagher (R-Yuba City) (at podium), Assistant Colusa County CVSO Don Parsons, and local veterans attend the Purple Heart Trail dedication in Colusa County. Photo taken by Richard Lau USAF (Ret.)



THE CALIFORNIA MODEL FOR VETERANS SERVICES

The California model for providing veteran services (i.e. the processes that connect veterans to benefits and services they have earned) is similar to many other states with a close partnership between state and county governments through the auspices of CalVet and the many County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) statewide. Collectively, the CVSO, through claims initiation and development, and CalVet, through claims development and representation, provide assistance to veterans and their dependents in preparing and submitting claims and in representing claimants before the federal, state and local agencies providing veterans benefits.

The California CVSO model epitomizes Governor Brown's often espoused belief in the principle of subsidiarity — the principle that government should do only what individuals and private organizations cannot do, and that governmental activities should be as local as possible.

This critical relationship with CVSOs ensures that veterans have the best opportunity to receive all earned benefits and facilitates access to services.

While the state directly supports services in United States Department of Veteran Affairs (USDVA) regional benefit offices, the CVSOs provide the underlying network that facilitates the direct support of the individual veteran or family member. CVSOs provide the local expertise for initiating claims, connecting veterans to services and generally assisting veterans, veteran dependents and survivors. They do this across the entire spectrum of federal, state and local benefits, including compensation and pension, vocational rehabilitation, medical services, veterans treatment courts, legal services, education, training, mental health services, and public assistance. CVSOs originate claims for all USDVA recognized organizations, as well as for CalVet. CVSOs are the key component in any state or federal effort to interface with the individual veteran and their family.

This model has widespread success nationwide, with twenty-eight of the fifty states using the CVSO model to assist veterans and their families in obtaining USDVA

benefits (as well as state benefits). The other states either use state employees, a combination of state employees and CVSOs (Texas), or contract with veterans service organizations to deliver services to their veterans.

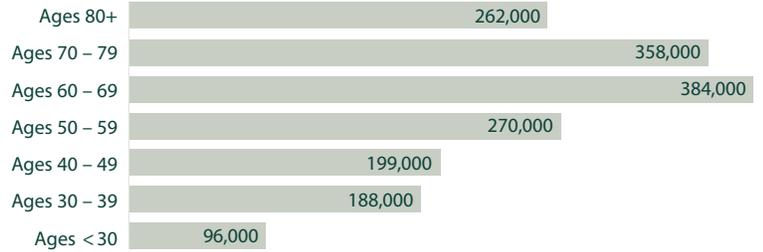
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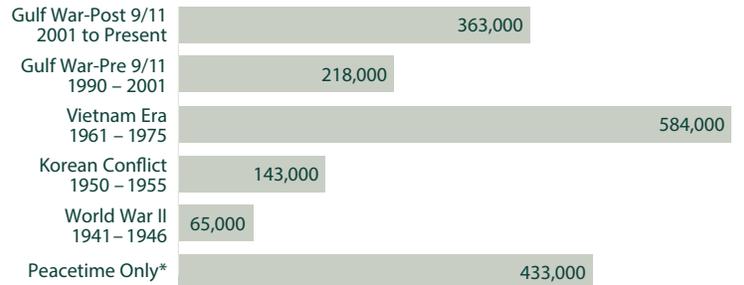
California Veterans by the Numbers

By County as of September 30, 2016

California Veterans by Age Group

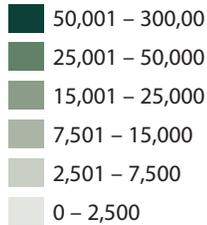


California Veterans by Era



*Includes Pre-WWII, between WWII & Korea, between Korea & Vietnam, between Vietnam & Gulf War

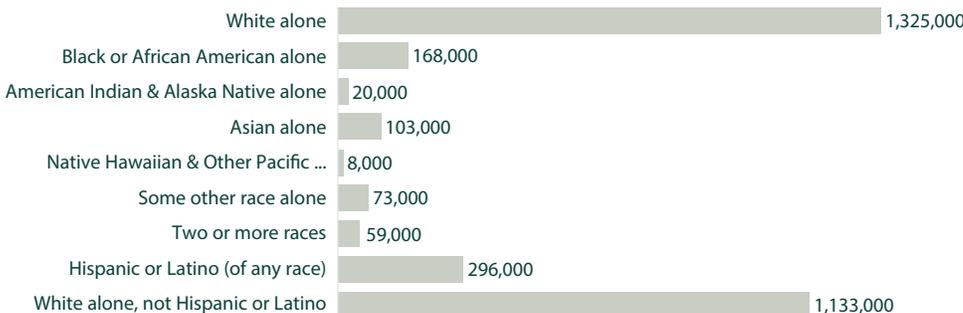
Veteran Population



California Veterans by Gender



California Veterans by Race/Ethnicity



Source: USDVA
VetPoP2014 estimated as
of September 30, 2016



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
1227 O STREET, SUITE 300 | SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

THE SECRETARY

For the past two years, I have had the tremendous honor of leading the State agency that is responsible for ensuring that California's 1.7 million veterans have access to the benefits they have earned through their service – whether that means helping with education benefits, job training, starting a business, buying a home or transitioning back to civilian life. At CalVet, we aim to be of service to all veterans, regardless of their age, gender, or period of service. But we do not do this work alone.

County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) play a vital role in serving California's large and diverse veteran population, helping to link them to the resources they need. This past year, our CVSOs mobilized to take their services straight to the front lines. As multiple wildfires devastated communities throughout our state – from Santa Rosa and Napa to Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles – our CVSOs stood ready to assist veterans. They traveled to evacuation sites and local assistance centers to help veterans who were affected by the fires, providing assistance with filing claims and helping to replace service-related and benefit documents.

CVSOs also partnered with CalVet and the DMV to help veterans apply for a veteran designation on their driver licenses. More importantly, during this process, many veterans learned about other services available to them and 18,000 of them applied for additional benefits. Since November 2015, 64,000 veterans have applied for the veteran designation. An additional \$17 million dollars in benefits has been awarded retroactively and \$31 million will be received by veterans statewide annually.

This strong partnership between CalVet and our CVSOs is a shining example of what we can accomplish when different levels of government work together. We share an important mission and I know you are thoroughly committed to working with us to improve the lives of California veterans and their families. The entire CalVet team and I greatly appreciate your ideas and your steadfast support.

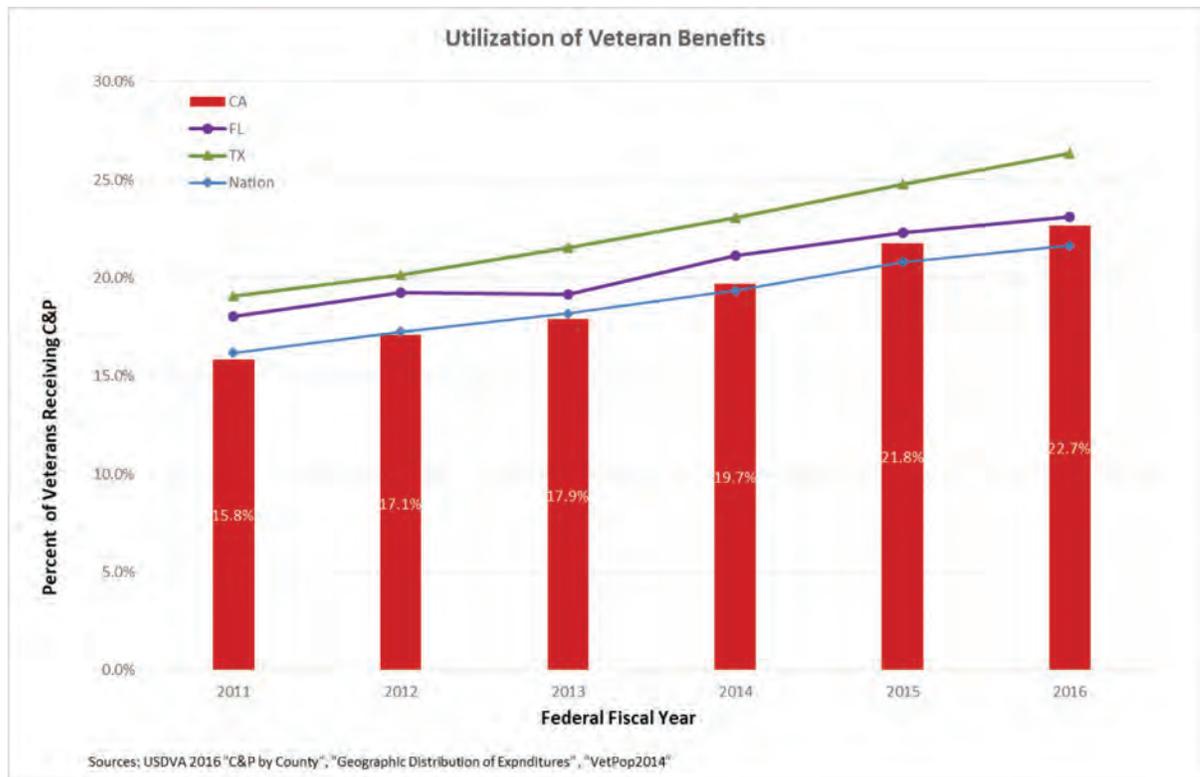
Thank you for everything you do.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vito Imbasciani MD".

Vito Imbasciani MD
Secretary

CALIFORNIA'S UTILIZATION OF VETERAN BENEFITS

California's utilization of the primary monetary veterans benefits (compensation and pension), has historically lagged behind the nation as a whole and more dramatically behind similar sized states. The end result is that some of California's veterans are not receiving benefits they earned through their service. Additionally, there is a significant loss of economic impact to the state by failing to bring these federal dollars into the economy.



Finding solutions to this underutilization issue has been the subject of extensive study by CalVet¹, the Bureau of State Audits² and others³. The solution condenses down to whether there are enough professional Veterans Service Representatives available to assist veterans in filing benefit claims. In California, those professional Veterans Service Representatives are primarily found on the CVSO staffs, and there are simply not enough available to serve the needs of California's veterans.

In 2007, CalVet recommended several strategies to correct the underutilization, including "... providing resources in support of additional full-time professional service representative staff with a focus on areas with large veteran populations and lower than average benefit participation rates."

Beginning in FY 13-14 subvention funding was increased from \$2.6 million to \$5.6 million in a one-time augmentation. Again in FY 14-15, the same one-time

augmentation was fought for and secured by the CACVSO. Finally, in FY 15-16, the \$5.6 million subvention level was made permanent via the Governor’s budget. Many counties used this increase to add additional staff; performance metrics gathered when this funding was first authorized showed a direct correlation between those new hires and increased monetary benefits. But even with these new hires, California still does not field enough professional Veterans Service Representatives to meet the demand.

What is the end result of this understaffing? A comparison of California benefit utilization rates to Florida’s and Texas’ rates shows that they significantly outperform California. As discussed earlier, this is because they field more Veterans Service Representatives, as a ratio of veterans served, than does California.

The end result is that up to \$1.2 Billion in federal funding is lost annually, impacting over 64,000 veterans and their families.

	Veteran Population	C&P Beneficiaries	C&P Utilization Rate	C&P Dollars
California	1,755,680	398,140	22.7%	\$7,252,271,000
Florida	1,533,306	354,442	23.1%	\$6,288,593,000
Texas	1,670,186	440,084	26.3%	\$8,433,064,000
Nationwide	21,368,156	4,072,841	19.1%	\$84,028,287,000

Source: CalVet Report “Monetary Benefits Attributable to the Assistance Of County Veterans Service Offices Fiscal Year 2016-17” dated October 1, 2017, pg iv

If California were to undertake additional funding increases targeted specifically to increase CVSO staffing, it too could realize benefit utilization rates similar to Texas and Florida. While connecting veterans to the benefits they have earned should be the primary motivator, adding approximately \$1.2 billion dollars annually to the economy further justifies the use of general fund monies to support CVSO staffing increases. Those new benefits are ongoing year-after-year, and circulate through the local economy multiple times, bringing payback through state and local taxes. It would be money well spent.

1 “Strategies to Improve California’s Utilization of Veteran Benefits,” report to the California State Legislature, March 15, 2007

2 “California Department of Veterans Affairs: Although It Has Begun to Increase Its Outreach Efforts and to Coordinate With Other Entities, It Needs to Improve Its Strategic Planning Process, and Its CalVet Home Loan Program Is Not Designed to Address the Housing Needs of Some Veterans,” October 2009, Bureau of State Audits Report 2009-108

3 Clark, Clayton A. “State Demographic and Veteran Disability.” Harvard University, June 2004, p. 50.

CVSO FUNDING — The State’s Contribution is Falling Further Behind

The cost of maintaining a CVSO is primarily a county general fund expense; however, counties with an established CVSO receive some state funds to supplement county funding. It is important to emphasize that while state general funds and federal pass-through funds distributed by CalVet assist counties in maintaining their CVSOs, the primary cost of the CVSO program statewide is a county-borne expense, as opposed to a state expense, as is illustrated in the chart below. Funds received by CVSOs are subject to both internal county audits and regular audits by the CalVet in accordance with the California Code of Regulations.



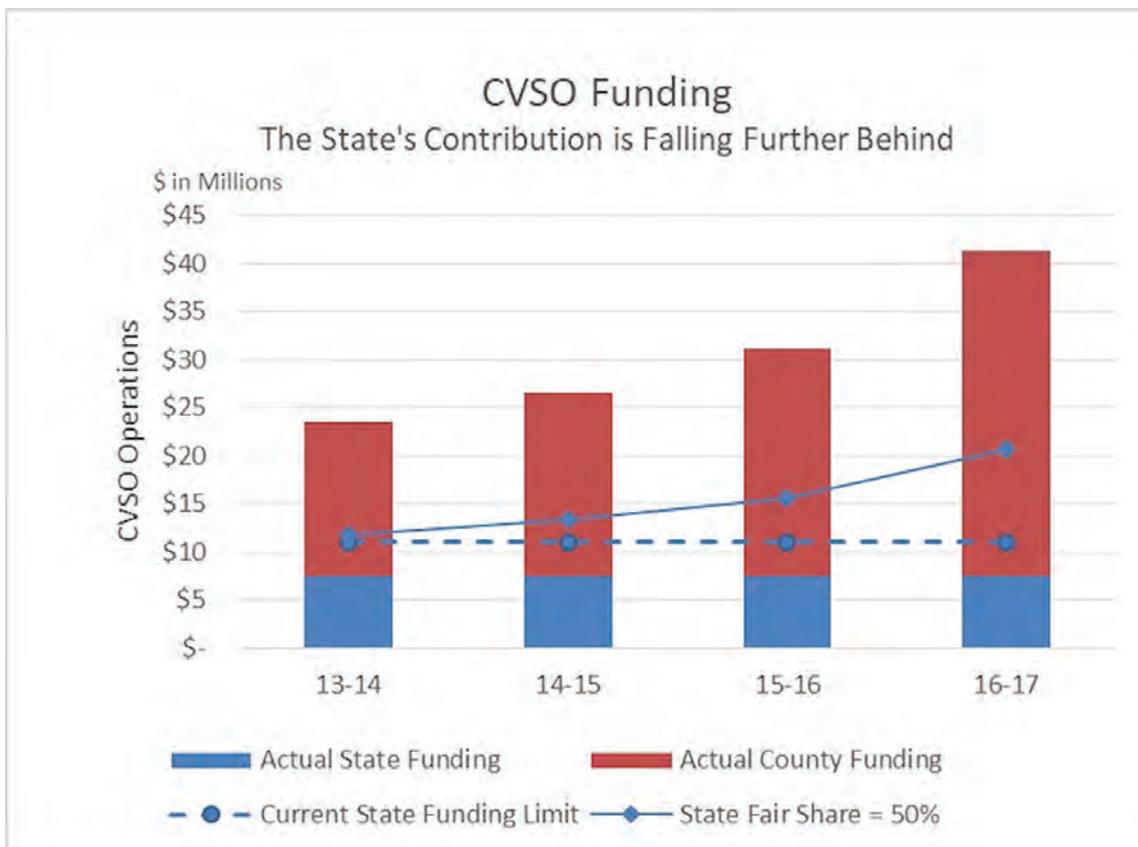
Sources: Fiscal Year 2016-17 Net County Costs as reported by Counties
Prior Year Actual Expenditures by Program as reported in Governor’s Budget
for Fiscal Year 2018-19

While every funding dollar is gratefully accepted and well spent by the counties, increased state funding could afford CVSOs the ability to accomplish so much more. In 2012, the Legislature put into statute its intention to equally share in the funding of CVSO operations, and set an \$11 million limit (which was 50% at that point in time). Yet, even with the recent increases in their share of funding, the state is still not meeting its goal to fund CVSO operations at either of those levels and, in fact, is falling further and further behind the goal of funding 50% of CVSO operations. The counties,

whose leadership clearly sees the increasing demand for veteran services, continue to raise their level of funding and the state falls further and further behind.

Without state matching funds, the CVSOs are only able to meet a portion of the total demand for assisting veterans in obtaining the benefits they earned. In the critical monetary benefits of compensation and pension, we estimate that up to \$1.2 billion in federal funds are lost annually, impacting over 64,000 veterans and their families.

“The Legislature further finds and declares that it is an efficient and reasonable use of state funds to increase the annual budget for county veterans service officers in an amount not to exceed eleven million dollars ...”



Sources: Net County Costs as reported by Counties for Fiscal Years 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17
 Prior Year Actual Expenditures by Program as reported in the Governor’s Budgets for Fiscal Years 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19

MAJOR VETERAN FACILITIES IN CALIFORNIA



CVSOs IN THE COMMUNITY



Kern County Veterans Service Representative Eric Hansen (second from right, front row) and Bakersfield Mayor Karen Goh (center front) with participants of the 3rd Marine Corps "Silkies" Hike, which brings awareness to veteran suicide.



Army Reserve Honor Guard raises POW/MIA and U.S. flags during a Memorial Day ceremony at the Santa Clara County Veterans Service Office.



Kern County CVSO staff members Christina Hang and Kevyn Tinoco volunteered to serve as Guardians for 53 Vietnam Veterans for an Honor Flight trip to the veterans memorials in Washington, DC. While the trip is free to veterans, the Guardians pay \$1,200 each for the privilege.

VETERAN STATISTICS BY COUNTY

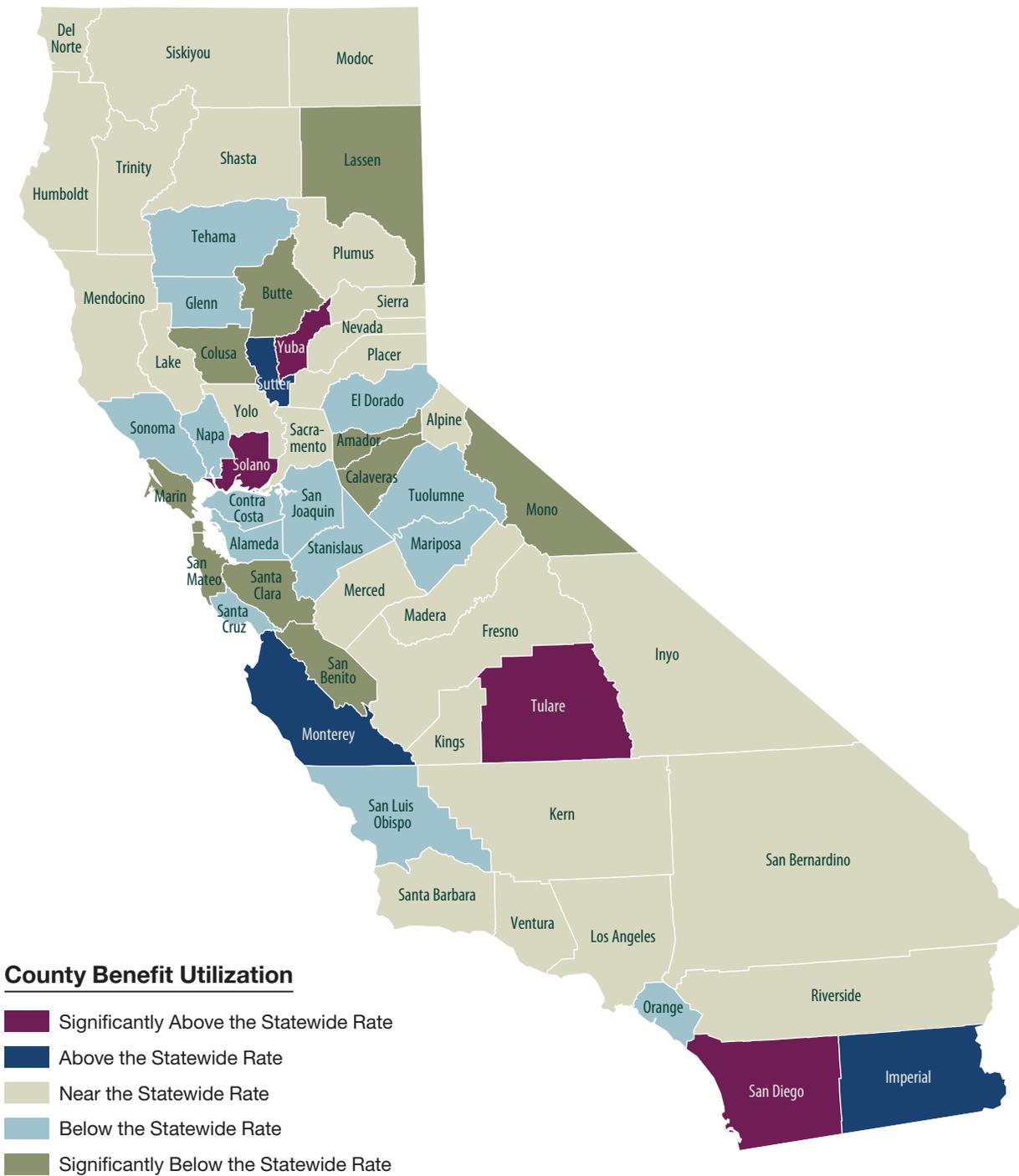
The county veteran statistics on pages 20 and 21 provide a comparison between counties using two common metrics, Compensation and Pension utilization and New Awards Obtained. To provide a more equitable comparison, the counties are grouped by size (large, medium, small or very small) based upon veteran population. County size is an arbitrary designation based upon veteran population with “Very Small” being less than 7,500 veterans, “Small” being more than 7,500 and less than 20,000 veterans, “Medium” being more than 20,000 and less than 75,000 veterans and “Large” as more than 75,000 veterans.

The left section of the table, “Compensation & Pension Utilization Rates by County,” includes the same metric, compensation and pension utilization rate, as used when comparing California to other states. Utilization rate is the percentage of veterans receiving compensation or pension benefits within the county for federal fiscal year 2016 as reported by the USDVA. This part of the table also shows the total compensation and pension paid, and the average amount each beneficiary receives for those benefits within the county. These metrics reflect the efforts of all organizations that assist veterans with receiving those benefits, not just the CVSOs. As such, this section represents the overall health of veterans service programs within that county, both public and private.

The right section of the table, “New Awards Attributable to CVSOs,” provides the monetary value of new or increased monetary benefits paid to eligible veterans and their dependents by the USDVA during the state’s fiscal year 2016-17. These amounts are directly attributable to the activities and efforts of the CVSOs. **In total, the CVSOs accounted for over \$437 million in new or increased federal veteran benefits being brought into California’s economy.** It should be noted that this table reports only the new or increased benefits obtained in the fiscal year, not the cumulative benefits and, as such, is a reflection of the ongoing effort of CVSOs to assist veterans in attaining the benefits they have earned — this is truly a “what have you done for me lately” metric.

Realizing that there is a lot of detail included on these two pages, we have also included a more visual graphic on page 19 to display how each county performs compared to the statewide average in compensation and pension utilization. Note that this graphic does not group the counties by population size.

COUNTY VETERAN BENEFIT UTILIZATION MAP



Sources: CalVet Report “Monetary Benefits Attributable to the Assistance Of County Veterans Service Offices Fiscal Year 2016-17” dated October 1, 2017, pp i-iii

VETERAN STATISTICS BY COUNTY

Veteran Statistics By County										New Awards Attributable to CVSOs FY 2016-17	
County	Total Compensation & Pension (C&P) Utilization by County									Total New Awards FY 2016-17 (Note 7)	Average New Award FY 2016-17
	Veteran Population (Note 1)	County Size (Note 2)	C&P Cases (Note 3)	Utilization Rate (Note 4)	C&P Dollars (Note 5)	Average C&P Award per Claimant (Note 6)					
LOS ANGELES	289,609	Large	58,627	20.2%	\$1,101,421,000	\$18,787	\$36,174,721	\$11,054			
SAN DIEGO	225,299	Large	73,268	32.5%	\$1,191,790,000	\$16,266	\$16,458,354	\$15,296			
RIVERSIDE	133,115	Large	34,749	26.1%	\$665,153,000	\$19,142	\$33,980,251	\$9,872			
ORANGE	116,917	Large	20,923	17.9%	\$384,322,000	\$18,368	\$18,752,399	\$10,595			
SAN BERNARDINO	110,655	Large	24,543	22.2%	\$466,053,000	\$18,989	\$45,097,823	\$9,901			
SACRAMENTO	84,381	Large	18,593	22.0%	\$361,594,000	\$19,448	\$4,788,431	\$24,556			
SANTA CLARA	56,011	Medium	9,296	16.6%	\$171,035,000	\$18,399	\$12,534,726	\$10,862			
ALAMEDA	54,222	Medium	10,004	18.5%	\$179,978,000	\$17,991	\$1,342,432	\$13,984			
CONTRA COSTA	51,627	Medium	9,536	18.5%	\$165,105,000	\$17,314	\$17,427,989	\$11,280			
KERN	46,391	Medium	10,242	22.1%	\$183,312,000	\$17,898	\$14,873,574	\$7,508			
FRESNO	43,073	Medium	10,083	23.4%	\$178,207,000	\$17,674	\$9,744,323	\$13,705			
VENTURA	40,999	Medium	8,746	21.3%	\$164,976,000	\$18,863	\$11,231,828	\$8,204			
SAN JOAQUIN	34,569	Medium	6,642	19.2%	\$134,395,000	\$20,234	\$11,230,911	\$10,351			
SOLANO	33,197	Medium	11,998	36.1%	\$214,843,000	\$17,907	\$32,230,504	\$13,457			
PLACER	29,796	Medium	5,939	19.9%	\$104,597,000	\$17,612	\$11,664,120	\$14,635			
SONOMA	27,569	Medium	4,900	17.8%	\$99,626,000	\$20,332	\$14,107,058	\$8,861			
SAN MATEO	27,020	Medium	3,800	14.1%	\$71,389,000	\$18,787	\$10,382,405	\$9,107			
STANISLAUS	25,340	Medium	4,695	18.5%	\$104,271,000	\$22,209	\$7,097,053	\$7,393			
SAN FRANCISCO	23,882	Medium	4,301	18.0%	\$77,498,000	\$18,019	\$9,084,494	\$7,031			
SANTA BARBARA	22,270	Medium	5,047	22.7%	\$87,933,000	\$17,423	\$8,432,424	\$11,213			
SAN LUIS OBISPO	20,474	Medium	3,694	18.0%	\$66,880,000	\$18,105	\$9,216,975	\$10,196			
MONTEREY	18,399	Small	4,957	26.9%	\$106,372,000	\$21,459	\$4,594,650	\$16,830			
TULARE	17,901	Small	5,213	29.1%	\$78,560,000	\$15,070	\$8,031,396	\$5,940			
BUTTE	17,341	Small	2,944	17.0%	\$69,181,000	\$23,499	\$8,741,869	\$7,833			
SHASTA	16,138	Small	4,102	25.4%	\$94,073,000	\$22,933	\$7,376,831	\$6,092			
EL DORADO	15,196	Small	2,762	18.2%	\$51,994,000	\$18,825	\$3,746,180	\$13,099			
KINGS	12,977	Small	2,003	24.9%	\$41,876,000	\$12,949	\$4,189,664	\$8,516			
MARIN	11,793	Small	3,234	13.5%	\$29,226,000	\$18,358	\$1,607,887	\$18,916			
SANTA CRUZ	10,998	Small	1,592	18.2%	\$47,117,000	\$23,523	\$6,398,686	\$10,809			
MERCED	10,854	Small	2,632	24.2%	\$44,183,000	\$16,787	\$2,580,973	\$6,864			
HUMBOLDT	10,064	Small	2,212	22.0%	\$47,624,000	\$21,530	\$4,423,714	\$8,640			

YOLO	9,458	Small	1,833	19.1%	\$34,667,000	\$19,153
NAPA	9,446	Small	1,810	19.4%	\$33,298,000	\$18,166
NEVADA	8,904	Small	1,849	20.8%	\$37,584,000	\$20,327
MADERA	8,305	Small	1,997	24.0%	\$35,155,000	\$17,604
IMPERIAL	7,611	Small	2,102	27.6%	\$30,556,000	\$14,537
SUTTER	6,728	Very Small	1,832	27.2%	\$31,977,000	\$17,455
YUBA	6,605	Very Small	2,336	35.4%	\$34,037,000	\$14,571
LAKE	6,455	Very Small	1,516	23.5%	\$31,164,000	\$20,557
TEHAMA	6,437	Very Small	1,148	17.8%	\$18,100,000	\$15,767
MENDOCINO	6,261	Very Small	1,360	21.7%	\$30,422,000	\$22,369
TUOLUMNE	6,143	Very Small	1,123	18.3%	\$23,111,000	\$20,580
CALAVERAS	5,531	Very Small	915	16.5%	\$17,841,000	\$19,498
AMADOR	4,201	Very Small	699	16.6%	\$12,571,000	\$17,984
SISKIYOU	4,185	Very Small	965	23.1%	\$18,261,000	\$18,923
LASSEN	3,578	Very Small	562	15.7%	\$10,014,000	\$17,819
SAN BENITO	2,547	Very Small	140	5.5%	\$13,579,000	\$96,993
DEL NORTE	2,529	Very Small	623	24.6%	\$12,523,000	\$20,101
MARIPOSA	2,106	Very Small	374	17.8%	\$6,903,000	\$18,457
PLUMAS	1,946	Very Small	449	23.1%	\$7,568,000	\$16,855
GLENN	1,712	Very Small	298	17.4%	\$5,363,000	\$17,997
TRINITY	1,523	Very Small	304	20.0%	\$5,881,000	\$19,345
INYO	1,470	Very Small	378	25.7%	\$6,036,000	\$15,968
MONO	1,296	Very Small	124	9.6%	\$2,209,000	\$17,815
COLUSA	1,183	Very Small	178	15.0%	\$4,193,000	\$23,556
MODOC	942	Very Small	219	23.2%	\$3,641,000	\$16,626
SIERRA	369	Very Small	87	23.6%	\$858,000	\$9,862
ALPINE	131	Very Small	Note 8	N/A	\$173,000	N/A
STATEWIDE	1,755,680		398,129	22.7%	\$7,252,271,000	\$18,216

Notes:

1. Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2016, published by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "VetPop 2014."
2. County size is an arbitrary designation for comparison purposes based upon veteran population with "Very Small" <= 7,500; 7,500<"Small"<=20,000; 20,000<"Medium"<=75,000; and "Large" >= 75,000.
3. The number of compensation and pension beneficiaries in the county as reported by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "FY 2016 Compensation and Pension by County." These cases are the result of all veterans service organizations or individual veterans who filed claims (they are not CVSO unique).
4. Utilization rate is the percent of veterans in the county receiving either compensation or pension benefits from the USDVA.
5. The total amount of compensation and pension benefits paid to beneficiaries in the county as reported by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "FY 2016 Geographic Distribution of Expenditures." These amounts are the total amount paid by USDVA for C&P benefits to claimants with addresses in the respective county. They are the cumulative result of all veterans service organizations or individual veterans who filed claims (they are not CVSO unique).
6. The average compensation and pension award received by beneficiaries in the county.
7. These amounts are the new or increased benefits obtained by the CVSO as reported in CalVet's Annual Report to the Legislature "Monetary Benefits Attributable to the Assistance Of County Veterans Service Offices" for Fiscal Year 2016-17. They do not include any awards attributable to other veterans service organizations or individual filers.
8. Less than 10 recipients, not reported by USDVA.

WHAT CVSOs DO

California Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) are committed to providing the highest quality service to California veterans, their families, our in-state active duty military and reserve forces, and our California National Guard.

In a recent survey, CVSOs were asked how much time they spend delivering the services and benefits identified in their annual report. While the list of services and benefits is long, most of the CVSO staff’s time is spent in providing direct claims and case management services to veterans and their families.

Activity	Percent of Average Day
Claims (including filing claims on behalf of beneficiaries for direct payments to veterans and their families, such as compensation, pension, disability indemnification, etc.)	48%
Case management (including providing direct services to veterans and their families to access benefits that may not result in monetary benefits, such as burial, educational, health, correction of military records, transportation, and homeless services)	25%
Information & Referrals (including educating veterans and their families on the myriad of services and benefits provided by other agencies, and then connecting them to those agencies, such as employment services, home loans, veterans homes, driver and business licenses, tax exemptions, veteran preferences, etc.)	20%
Outreach and Advocacy (including providing outreach and education to places where veterans and their families may congregate to ensure that veterans and their families are aware of the benefits they have earned and how to access them, including campuses, USDVA clinics and hospitals, jails & prisons, etc.)	7%

CVSO SERVICES — AT NO CHARGE TO THE VETERAN!

The California Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) can provide a wide range of assistance to veterans and their families. CVSOs are trained and accredited by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and other veterans service organizations. CVSOs are personnel who can help with USDVA claims, and answer questions about both state and federal benefits.

It is important to seek out a trained Veterans Service Representative (VSR) at the CVSO office to assist with any claim for benefits. Should an appeal become necessary, the CVSO can assist there too.

Here are a few of the benefits available to veterans and their families.

Disability Compensation Benefits

This is a tax-free monetary benefit paid to veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. Compensation may also be paid for post-service disabilities that are considered related or secondary to disabilities occurring in service and for disabilities presumed to be related to circumstances of military service, even though they may arise after service. The CVSO can assist the veteran in applying for USDVA Healthcare to care for both service-connected and non service-connected issues.

USDVA Pension Benefits

This benefit helps veterans and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income through the Veterans Pension and Survivors Pension benefit programs. This benefit is available to both the veteran and dependents and is based on income.

Education Benefits for Veterans

Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of education benefits, generally payable for 15 years following release from active duty. A monthly housing allowance, annual books and supplies stipend are available.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Veterans may receive vocational rehabilitation and employment services to help with job training, employment accommodations, resume development, and job-seeking skills coaching. USDVA's Education and Career Counseling program is a great opportunity for servicemembers and veterans to get personalized counseling and support to help guide their career paths, ensure the most effective use of their USDVA benefits, and achieve their goals.

California State Benefits

College Fee Waiver

CalVet administers the College Fee Waiver program for dependents of veterans. The basic benefit is the waiver of mandatory systemwide fees at any campus of the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU) or a California Community College (CCC). This benefit is available to the children of service-connected disabled veterans. Students must meet residency requirements and income requirements. The CVSO is the approval authority for this benefit.

CalVet has many additional benefits available for veterans, including the CalVet Home Loan, business license tax and fee waivers, fishing and hunting licenses, license plates, motor vehicle registration fee waivers, property tax exemptions, and state park and recreation passes. The CVSO can assist in applying for any of these benefits.

CALIFORNIA VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

COUNTY	COURT?	VETERANS ^a	OEF/OIF ^b	POPULATION ^c
Orange	Yes (11/08)	116,917	6,227	3,183,011
Santa Clara	Yes (11/08)	56,011	2,726	1,927,888
San Bernardino	Yes (1/10)	110,655	7,280	2,139,570
Tulare	Yes (2/10)	17,901	1,097	466,339
Los Angeles Downtown	Yes (9/10)	289,609	17,470	10,241,335
Ventura	Yes (11/10)	40,999	2,884	856,508
San Diego	Yes (2/11)	225,299	28,666	3,288,612
San Joaquin	Yes (4/11)	34,569	1,640	733,383
Santa Barbara - Santa Maria	Yes (11/11)	22,270	1,167	446,717
Riverside	Yes (1/12)	133,115	8,235	2,347,828
El Dorado	Yes (2/12)	15,196	407	183,750
San Mateo	Yes (5/12)	27,020	1,084	766,041
Santa Barbara - Santa Barbara	Yes (7/12)			
Placer	Yes (9/12)	29,796	1,219	373,796
Los Angeles Lancaster	Yes (3/13)			
San Francisco	Yes (4/13)	23,882	1,076	866,583
Kings	Yes (4/13)	12,977	1,555	150,373
San Luis Obispo	Yes (6/13)	20,474	753	277,977
Alameda	Yes (11/13)	54,222	2,278	1,627,865
Sacramento	Yes (7/14)	84,381	4,614	1,495,297
Solano	Yes (9/14)	33,197	3,099	431,498
Lake	Yes (9/15)	6,455	132	64,306
Butte	Yes (9/15)	17,341	701	224,601
Santa Cruz	Yes (10/15)	10,998	306	275,902
Sonoma	Yes (11/15)	27,569	834	501,959
Calaveras	Yes (1/16)	5,531	104	45,207
Monterey	Yes (1/16)	18,399	1,149	437,178
Stanislaus	Yes (2/16)	25,340	1,214	540,214
Fresno	Yes(6/16)	43,073	2,524	984,541
Del Norte	Yes (10/16)	2,529	72	26,811
Madera	Yes (10/16)	8,305	338	155,349
Merced	Yes (7/17)	10,854	596	271,579
Contra Costa	Yes (8/17)	51,627	1,890	1,123,429

Footnotes

a. Source: Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2016, published by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "VetPop 2014."

b. Source: DoD as of 2010 (based on last known home address at discharge)

c. Source: California Department of Finance, 2016

* County with 10 or fewer OEF/OIF veterans

HOT TOPICS

California Veterans' Treatment Courts and Alternative Justice Programs

In 2006, California became the first state to establish an alternative sentencing program for veterans and military members when the Governor signed AB 2586 (Parra) into law. Under this statute, veterans or active duty service members with service-related mental health issues may be sentenced to therapy (federal VA) in lieu of incarceration. The veteran, upon completion of the program, may have charges reduced, records expunged and rights restored, and will not have to list the conviction on job applications. This law is the basis for the state's network of Veterans Treatment Courts (VTCs), although it can be implemented in any courtroom. VTCs in California are not mandated and receive no allocated state funding.

Another related law — SB 1227 (Hancock) signed in 2014 — established diversion for veterans accused of misdemeanors. Qualifying veterans completing this therapy can have their charges dismissed. And in 2017, SB 725 (Jackson) was signed into law, clarifying that veterans and servicemembers suffering from PTSD and other mental health disorders are eligible for pretrial diversion programs for misdemeanor DUIs, thus ensuring that these veterans get the help they need sooner and more effectively. For more information on veterans' justice-related matters, visit www.cvltf.org.

Library Veteran Resource Centers

CalLibraries, in partnership with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), has established 58 Veteran Resource Centers at libraries throughout the state. These centers provide veteran benefit information and referral assistance to veterans and their families to assist in connecting them to federal, state, and community-based benefits and services. For a list of participating locations, please visit: <https://calibrariesforveterans.org/veterans.html>

CACVSO Mentor Program

To address the loss of institutional knowledge that comes with the retirement or reassignment of CVSOs, CalVet has undertaken a mentorship program to ensure that Veterans Service Representatives (VSR) are well trained to provide claims services. However, there has been no such program to ensure that offices, on a whole, are working effectively and efficiently to reach and connect veterans to services — until now. Because each county is a stand-alone entity, it is unlikely that there is the needed expertise within every county to train new CVSO staff on best practices in the veterans service arena. Therefore, the CACVSO has recently initiated a mentor program designed to get new CVSOs and staff up to speed quickly, as well as assist established offices to enhance and streamline their services. The CACVSO identifies high performing offices and high performing individual VSRs to act as subject matter experts and links them with those looking for help or advice. This is particularly helpful in smaller offices (or counties), where there may be only one or two employees, or less external resources.

CAPITOL CORNER



CACVSO members present 2016 Legislator of the Year award to Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks).



CACVSO members present 2016 Legislator of the Year award to Senator Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber).



CVSOs in front of Governor's office during visit to the Capitol.



CVSOs hear briefing on veteran legislation and priorities from Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

IMPORTANT 2017 LEGISLATION BENEFITING VETERANS AND MILITARY SIGNED INTO LAW

Signed by the Governor:

- AB 153 — Chávez; State Stolen Valor Act updated
- AB 226 — Cervantes; Teacher Credentialing: Spouses of Active Duty Members
- AB 242 — Arambula / Patterson; Certificates of Death: Veterans
- AB 360 — Muratsuchi; State Bar: Pro Bono Legal Assistance: Veterans
- AB 363 — Quirk Silva; Driver's licenses: veteran designation
- AB 365 — Muratsuchi; Pupil instruction: coursework and graduation requirements: children of military families
- AB 376 — Chávez; Veterans' Benefits: Veteran Farmers or Ranchers
- AB 866 — Cunningham; State Highways: Gateway Monuments
- AB 1365 — Reyes; Veterans Homes: Planning Strategy
- AB 1710 — Veterans Affairs Committee; Prohibited Discrimination Against Service Members
- AB 1711 — Veterans Affairs Committee; State Military Reserve Personnel: Leave Benefits
- SB 3 — Beall; Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2018
- SB 156 — Anderson; Military and Veterans: Transition Assistance
- SB 266 — Dodd; Armed Service Members: Consumer Loans
- SB 330 — Berryhill; Building permit waiver, disabled veterans, improvements
- SB 339 — Roth; Veterans Treatment Courts: Judicial Council Assessment
- SB 455 — Newman; Pupil Enrollment: Military Dependents
- SB 725 — Jackson; Veterans: Pretrial Diversion: Driving Privileges
- SB 747 — Newman; State Military: Officer Commissions
- SB 776 — Newman; Corrections: Veterans' Benefits

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The CACVSO has selected State Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton) and Assemblyman Rocky Chávez (R-Oceanside) as the recipients of the Motomu Nakasako Legislator of the Year awards for 2017.

The Motomu Nakasako Award is named after “Mote” Nakasako, a Los Angeles County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) who was constantly involved in legislation to improve the lives of veterans. He was a decorated member of the Army’s 442nd Regimental Combat Team, one of World War II’s most decorated units.



Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton)

Elected in 2016, Senator Newman currently serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. Upon graduation from Yale University, he was commissioned through the US Army Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. His active duty assignments included service in South Korea with a nuclear weapons detachment and conventional artillery units in the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.

In 2012, he founded ArmedForce2Workforce, a non-profit group that assists young veterans in Orange County and Greater Los Angeles find employment. He is a member of the Steering Committee for the Orange County Veterans & Military Families Collaborative, 1st Vice Chair of the California Democratic Party Veterans Caucus, and co-founder of the Veteran Business Network of Greater Los Angeles. He is also a member of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In 2017, Newman authored numerous veterans and military related bills, including but not limited to:

- Military and Veteran Suicide Prevention Awareness Week
- California Community Colleges: Veteran Resource Centers
- State public employees: sick leave: veterans with service-related disabilities
- Public school employees: former or current members of the Armed Forces of the United States or California National Guard: leave of absence for illness or injury
- Corrections: veterans’ benefits



Assemblyman Rocky Chávez (R-Oceanside)

Assemblyman Rocky Chávez began his public service career immediately after graduation from California State University, Chico when he joined the United States Marine Corps. He spent more than 28 years as a United States Marine, rising to the rank of Colonel and being assigned Chief of Staff for the 4th Marine Division.

In 2009, Chávez was appointed by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to serve as Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs and later served as Acting Secretary. Prior to that, he served on the Oceanside City Council.

Elected in 2012, he serves on the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee and also as Chairman of the Governor's Military Council.

In 2017, Chávez authored five bills helping veterans and servicemembers that were signed into law:

- California Stolen Valor Act; conform to the federal Stolen Valor Act of 2013
- Eligibility for resident classification; enrolled dependents of an Armed Forces member
- Require the state to assist, educate, train, and support California's military veterans to enter into farming or ranching careers
- Authorize a veterans memorial district to provide funding to providers of supportive services
- Resolution honoring the service and sacrifice made by members of the Armed Forces and their families

Past Recipients of the CACVSO Motomu Nakasako Award for Legislator of the Year

2016 — Senator Jim Nielsen and Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin
 2015 — Senator Richard Roth and Assemblyman Jim Frazier
 2014 — Senator Ben Hueso and Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva
 2013 — Senator Ellen Corbett and Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez

Recipient of CACVSO Lifetime Achievement Award

2015 — Assemblywoman Toni Atkins
 2011 — Assemblyman Paul Cook

CACVSO LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Since the 1980s, the CACVSO has been active at the State Capitol, advocating on behalf of California veterans, military members, and their families. From 2001 to 2017, the CACVSO was represented by Pete Conaty & Associates. Army Veteran Seth Reeb joined the firm in 2017, and in 2018, representation of the CACVSO transitioned to Reeb Government Relations (RGR). Pete Conaty will serve as a consultant to RGR to share his wealth of institutional knowledge with the new firm.



About Seth Reeb

Seth enlisted in the US Army in 2004 as an infantryman with the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Polk, Louisiana. He served in Afghanistan in 2006 and Iraq in 2007-2008. He is the recipient of the Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, and Army Commendation Medal for Valor. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant prior to leaving the Army in 2009.

Seth joined his father's firm, Reeb Government Relations, LLC (RGR), as a legislative advocate in January 2017 and has lobbied on behalf of veterans organizations ever since.

RGR was established in January 2005 to assist clients with policy analysis, issues management and California legislative and regulatory advocacy. With the addition of Seth Reeb to the firm, RGR is now representing the CACVSO, as well as the veterans service organizations formerly represented by Pete Conaty.



About Dana Nichol

Dana Nichol joined Pete Conaty and Associates in 2004 as an Associate Lobbyist and has worked on all aspects of legislative and budget issues pertaining to the CVSOs and veterans service organizations, as well as business, water, non-profit museums, local government, and recreational land-use clients. In 2018, Dana transferred to Reeb Government Relations to continue to serve veterans and military clients.



About Pete Conaty

After his 21-year military career, Pete established the advocacy firm of Pete Conaty and Associates in 1996. Over the last 31 years, he has worked on over 1,300 veterans and military legislative bills at the State Capitol. In 2010 and 2015, he was awarded the CalVet Secretary's Award for his "invaluable contributions to California veterans." He will continue to consult with Reeb Government Relations on veterans and military issues.

CACVSO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



About Tom Splitgerber

Tom Splitgerber is the CACVSO Executive Director. Dr. Splitgerber served in the United States Navy for 30 years. He spent 15 years in the Naval Medical Department in executive medicine positions, including twice as Commanding Officer and Executive Officer of the Navy's graduate dental school. Upon retirement, Tom served for five years as CEO/Executive Director of the Veterans Museum & Memorial Center in San Diego. He then served as the San Diego

County Veterans Service Officer for 11 years. During his tenure, the San Diego CVSO was one of the most active veterans service offices in California.

Tom served as President of the CACVSO for two years and President of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers for two years. He is co-founder of the San Diego Veterans Coalition and the Vets Excel, and is also President of the Miramar Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America.

CACVSO STATE LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM FOR THE 2017-2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Additional Local Assistance Funding for CVSOs

1. In 2018, the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) is sponsoring legislation to raise the state's Local Assistance to counties for CVSO offices from the current \$5.6 million funding level to \$7 million. Also, the eventual goal is to fully fund CVSOs by permanently appropriating \$16 million in Local Assistance funding, which would bring the state in line with paying half of the funding actually needed to operate CVSOs throughout the state. Currently, the counties pick up the majority of the funding. It was originally intended that the state and counties equally share in this cost. As part of this legislative effort, the CACVSO will continue to educate the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the public on the importance and value of County Veterans Service Officers.

California's Eight Veterans Homes

2. Support ongoing efforts to update the Military and Veterans Code concerning all aspects related to California veterans homes to ensure that all veterans in all homes are treated equally. California has gone from one veterans home (Yountville, est. 1884) to its eight current veterans homes. The Military and Veterans Code has not been updated to establish uniform procedures since before the new homes were opened.

State Agency Coordination

3. Support legislation that would require state agencies to coordinate with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to improve state services provided to veterans.

Many state agencies are involved in administering services to veterans. Improved coordination between agencies would allow veterans to more easily access these services, and would also allow the CVSOs to better assist veterans.

Other Legislative Priorities, 2017-18 Legislative Session

1. Support legislation that would create a Governor's Memorial Certificate similar to the Presidential Memorial Certificate. Include information directing survivors to the CVSOs.
2. Support legislation that would provide state income tax relief to retirement pay of military retirees.
3. Support legislation that would require an individual, who is assisting a veteran with filing a claim for benefits, to notify that veteran if they are not a VA-accredited representative, and make it a criminal offense to intentionally misdirect or mislead a veteran, or anyone acting on a veteran's behalf, concerning benefits or entitlements for their own monetary gain.
4. Support legislation that would expand laws to prevent dishonest vendors and businesses that prey on or scam veterans and active duty military personnel by criminalizing their activities.

5. Support legislation that would continue to support expansion of veterans treatment courts to more counties by providing state funding of veterans' treatment courts in California.
6. Support legislation that would reform the current system of property tax relief for disabled veterans by raising the current state dollar limitation on property tax relief for disabled veterans.
7. Support legislation that would reduce property tax assessment on veterans service organizations' posts and chapters.
8. Support legislation that would support the awarding of state grants through CalVet to veterans service organizations and veterans service agencies that provide claims assistance and outreach to California veterans.
9. Support legislation that would restore the veterans-only specialized license plate, so that there would be two plates available for sale — "Veteran" and "Honoring Veterans."
10. Support legislation that would criminalize the vandalism and destruction of veterans', police, fire and first responders' memorials, monuments and graves.
11. Support legislation to ensure that federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections are also in state law and supersede any binding arbitration contracts.
12. Support legislation that would expand Prop. 63 mental health funding support for veterans suffering from homelessness and mental health issues.
13. Fund state-sponsored veterans' resource centers at state community colleges and universities (CSU and UC systems).
14. Support legislation that would increase transparency in asbestos claims cases that affect veterans who were exposed to asbestos while in the service, so that there will be funds available for future claims by veterans.
15. Support legislation that would create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) between CalVet Veterans Homes and Veterans Service Organization (VSOs) to provide volunteers to the state veterans homes similar to the federal Veterans Administration Volunteer Service (VAVS) program.
16. Support legislation that would require that California Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises (DVBES) hire more disabled and non-disabled veterans. Currently, there is no requirement for DVBES to hire veterans.
17. Support the legislative priorities of the state veterans service organizations that are in-line with our own legislative priorities.

CACVSO TOP FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, 2018

1. Support legislation that would provide increased access for CVSOs to USDVA information systems (i.e., VBMS, VACOLS, SHARE, MAPD, etc.) for use in developing and monitoring claims submitted on behalf of veterans, regardless of VA Power-of Attorney (POA), to USDVA client and claims databases. Enhancing this access will result in better, timelier services to claimants and reduce the workload in USDVA call centers.
2. Support legislative, regulatory or policy changes that would create a federal/state/local government partnership to reduce the USDVA veterans claims backlog and expand outreach services to veterans.
3. Support legislation that would authorize USDVA pharmacies to honor prescriptions written by non-USDVA physicians. Currently, the USDVA medical system will only provide prescription medication to eligible veterans if the prescription is written by a USDVA physician.
4. Support legislation that would eliminate the Means Test for veterans to qualify for USDVA medical care. These income limitations have excluded some veterans, who would otherwise qualify for enrollment, from obtaining their primary healthcare through the USDVA.

Other Federal Legislative Priorities, 2018

1. Support legislation that would include “Blue Water Navy” veterans into the set of veterans with presumed exposure to Agent Orange.
2. Support legislation that would provide for payment of Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) for all military retirees, regardless of the percentage of their service-connected disabilities.
3. Support legislation that would eliminate Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset.
4. Support legislation, regulatory or policy changes which expand/increase USDVA responsibility to educate veterans on their entitlements.
5. Support legislation that would provide for a pro-rata additional allowance for dependents for all levels of compensation.
6. Support legislation that would authorize states with Departments of Veterans Affairs that are accredited with the USDVA to cross-accredit CVSOs for other states.
7. Support legislation that would eliminate the requirement for war-time service as an eligibility requirement for non-service connected and death pension.
8. Support legislation that would reduce the eligibility criteria for veterans to meet Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program requirements.
9. Support legislation that would expand the eligibility criteria for USDVA Dental Services for veterans eligible for USDVA Healthcare.

Veteran Driver License and ID Available

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE U.S. MILITARY? YOU MAY QUALIFY TO PROUDLY DISPLAY **VETERAN** ON YOUR CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE OR IDENTIFICATION CARD.

IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

1 Find your military discharge certificate (DD214). If you need assistance obtaining your military records, then contact your County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO).

2 Take your DD214 and government identification to your CVSO to obtain your Veteran Status Verification Form.

3 Go online or call DMV for an appointment. Then bring your Veteran Status Verification Form to DMV. Complete your application, pay any fees including the \$5 fee to add the Veteran Designation.
Note: tests may be required.

For faster CVSO service, schedule an appointment by finding your local CVSO at www.calvet.ca.gov or calling (844) 737-8838.

To schedule an appointment at a DMV, visit www.dmv.ca.gov or call (800) 777-0133.



www.calvet.ca.gov

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VETERANS DESIGNATION ON THE CALIFORNIA'S DRIVERS LICENSE

An Unqualified Success Story

Nearly 18,000 more of California's 1.7 million veterans are now taking advantage of federal veterans' benefits for which they were previously unaware of eligibility, thanks to legislation authored by Assemblymember Jim Frazier (D-Oakley) in 2014. As of November 2017, these benefits total over \$31 million in monthly payments to California veterans. This is in addition to over \$17 million in retroactive payments to these same veterans. California requires any veteran who wishes to have "veteran" on their driver's license to obtain an official form to present to the DMV from their local county veterans service office.

Veterans benefits are not like Social Security — where when you reach a certain age, you apply and start to receive monthly benefits. Veterans' benefits for Compensation and Pension must be applied for by the veteran — and each veteran's case is different, depending on a multitude of factors. To date, over 64,000 California veterans have applied for the "veteran" driver's license. This visit is often their first visit to a county veterans service office. Because County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) are trained to identify possible benefits that the veteran could be eligible for, the CVSO will start to develop, process and file a claim for the veteran — all at no cost to the veteran. This program is only slightly more than two years old and it will continue to grow and expand as more veterans learn about it. This program is a joint venture with the California Department of Veterans Affairs, the CVSOs and the Department of Motor Vehicles. The program honors the service of California's 1.7 million veterans, including those still serving. Additionally, the "veteran" designation often means businesses can easily identify the veteran status when offering discounts to veterans.



Directory

You can find who your local CVSO is by dialing (844) 737-8838.

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California

VETERANS LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM



Whether you are a Veteran, or want to show your support and appreciation for our Veterans, purchasing a Veterans License Plate helps increase awareness and directly supports Veterans Programs. For more information, visit our website at www.calvet.ca.gov or call your local County Veterans Service Office at (844) 737-8838.

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Proceeds from the California Veterans License Plate program go to support Veteran services in California.

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