



# Leave No Veteran Behind

CACVSO AND CALVET — WORKING TOGETHER

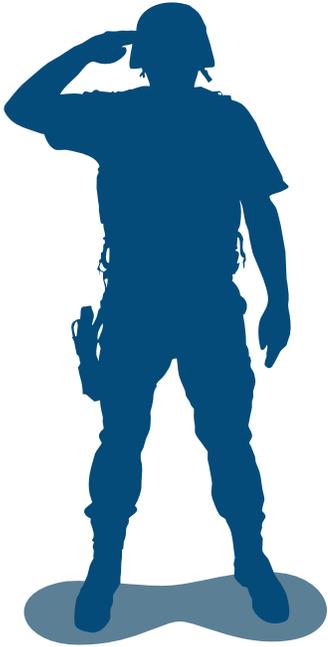
**2017 ANNUAL REPORT AND DIRECTORY**



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

Professional Veterans Advocates Serving California's Veterans and Their Families

# Supporting Veterans to obtain Home Ownership throughout California



More than

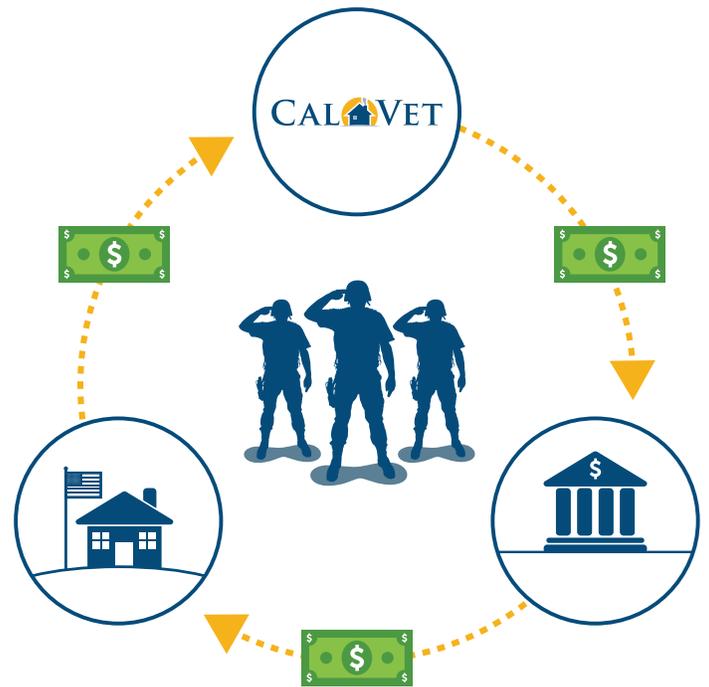
# 423,000

Veterans have Benefited

For 95 years CalVet Home Loans has helped Veterans purchase homes in California. More than 423,000 Veterans have benefited since inception and strong demand from Veterans to buy homes continues throughout California.

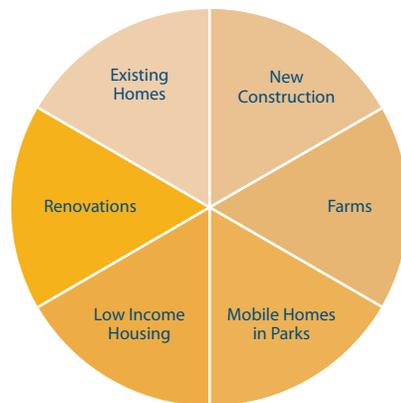
## Self Supporting

The CalVet Home Loan Program has operated as a self-supporting enterprise fund that has never required payment by the taxpayers of California to operate. CalVet sells Veterans General Obligation Bonds and lends the proceeds to Veterans in every California county to purchase their homes. CalVet then collects the mortgage payments and uses these monies to pay off the bonds.



“  
**CalVet Home Loans is doing an amazing job taking care of us Vets!**

– Miller Family



Calvet Home Loans provides the lending solutions our Veterans are looking for: existing single family residences, new construction, renovation loans, mobile homes in parks, and farms. CalVet is able to meet the unique needs and wants of our California Veterans.

## Voters Support Veterans

# 26

**Voter Approved Bond Deals**

Since 1921, the state of California has regularly sought and received voter approval to issue Veterans General Obligation Bonds, the proceeds of which are used to finance loans made to Veterans through the CalVet Home Loan Program. California voters have approved all 26 separate Veterans' Bond Acts.

## **PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CALVET & CACVSO**

2016 has been a stellar year for California veterans, thanks to assistance and support from the Legislature, Governor Brown, and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet).

The state's increase in permanent Local Assistance funding for County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) to \$5.6 million has allowed CVSOs to bring a return on investment of 87 times the cost to the state. This increased funding resulted in over \$487 million in new federal benefits paid directly to our state's veterans. This does not include the ongoing federal dollars that are sent monthly to our veterans from successful claims awarded in previous years.

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) and CalVet have forged a solid bond in service to our more than 1.8 million California veterans and their dependent families. Working together, we have produced close to \$5 billion in Compensation and Pension Payments to our veteran community through the VA Claims process in the last year. The 56 counties participating in the claims process are supported by state Local Assistance payments that comprise close to 20% of the counties' total budget support for CVSOs.

The implementation of Assemblyman Jim Frazier's AB 935 in November 2015, allowing a VETERAN designation on the California driver's license, has driven tens of thousands of veterans into the offices of CVSOs — many of whom have never explored their VA benefits, before. This has resulted in a huge uptick in benefits for veterans and funding from the federal government into California.

Our Association meets with CalVet for strategic planning four times a year to be sure that we are on the same page when it comes to serving our vets. CalVet has created a CVSO training academy that trains new Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) and CVSOs in the very complicated VA pension and compensation claims process.

CalVet also plans and executes three training conferences to ensure that all CVSOs and VSRs are current on the latest VA rule changes and improvements.

We, the California CVSOs, have never had a closer or more productive relationship with CalVet in the last 40 years of partnership. The leadership at CalVet — including Secretary Dr. Vito Imbasciani, Deputy Secretary Keith Boylan and Assistant Deputy Secretary Angela Yamamoto — have gone the extra mile to make sure we are all working together and coordinating efforts for our vets. The proof that this collaboration is working is in the number of veterans who now get veterans benefits, including compensation, pension, medical care, education and housing. We look forward to many years of productive cooperation with CalVet.

Ted Puntillo

President, CACVSO (February 2016 to present)

Solano County CVSO

## 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.

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*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.*

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## 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 Civil War, 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 76% of the cost, even with the increased funding.**

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

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## **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 Services staff.



## CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DECEMBER 2, 2016

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### **COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS BRING IN OVER \$487 MILLION IN NEW FEDERAL VETERANS BENEFITS TO CALIFORNIA!**

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) announced today that during fiscal year 2015-16, they assisted California's veterans in filing claims with the federal government which resulted in a minimum in payments of **\$487,150,998** according to recently released figures from the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Many of California's 1.8 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 can be very complicated. County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO's) are county employees whose job is the assist the veterans in their county in obtaining their earned federal benefits. **The services CVSO's provide are 100% free to veterans and their families.** The majority of CVSO funding is provided by the counties (76%); while the remainder comes from the state's General Fund (18%) and other various state programs because of the work CVSO's do to help veterans with mental health services and MediCal cost avoidance.

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 boon to the local economies, as well as helping veterans. **CVSO's receive no funding from the federal government.**

**The annual cost of operating CVSO's is about \$31.2 million and CVSO's are responsible for bringing in over \$487 million in new federal monies for California's veterans.** Therefore, CVSO's are guiding the state's veterans to the appropriate benefits, saving the state money by lessening cost pressures on state and local programs, AND getting over a 15-fold return on investment! This does not take into account the economic multiplier effect of an added \$487 million in federal monies going into the state's local economies, as the veterans who are the direct beneficiaries of these monetary benefits, spend it in on everyday living expenses.

**According to CACVSO President Ted Puntillo** "Our motto for 2016 was "Boots on the Ground. This strategy of outreach into the community in search of eligible veterans as well as the successful implementation of the VETERAN designation on the driver's license, which brought new veterans into our offices for verification, allowed us to serve more veterans than ever and bring in \$107 million more than last year in federal benefits paid directly to the veteran".

"The CACVSO would like to thank the State Legislature and their dedicated staff who had the foresight to give us the tools we need to 'Serve Those Who Have Served Us'" noted Scott Holwell, CACVSO Legislative Chair.

#### **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 1.84 million veterans as well as their dependents and survivors.

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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:

### Helping a Veteran's Widow

While reviewing a file from 2005 during the transfer of paper records to digital format, the CVSO found that the widow of a Vietnam veteran — who had been on pension since 2009 — was now eligible for more benefits because of new rules regarding her late husband's exposure to Agent Orange. The CVSO tracked the widow to New Mexico and worked with her to file a claim for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. The claim was approved and the widow was granted \$116,831 in retroactive benefits to 2005. (Humboldt County)

### Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) / Helping Veterans Get VA Medical Care

A highly decorated combat veteran with three tours in Iraq came to the Tehama County CVSO office seeking help. With the CVSO's help, he has transitioned out of a rehab-facility for PTSD and alcohol recovery. He is receiving VA compensation, full VA health care and is sober. He wants other veterans to know there is help through CVSO offices. (Tehama County)

### Veterans Designation on Driver's License and Reaching New Veterans

A former National Guard member came into the Contra Costa CVSO office to obtain the "veteran" designation on his driver's license. While National Guard members do not currently qualify for this benefit, the CVSO learned that the Guardsman's brother



Colusa County CVSO provides outreach to veterans at many community events such as the Veteran's Day ceremony at the County of Colusa Veterans Tribute Wall. CVSOs attend numerous veterans and community events in order to make veterans aware of the benefits and services that may be available to them.

was a Vietnam-era veteran who suffered from a non-service related mental health disorder, was living in a shipping container in his father's backyard, and recycling cans for about \$100 per month. The CVSO assisted him with an application for the VA's Disability Pension benefit, which was granted, and the veteran now receives a monthly income of \$1,072, allowing him to obtain housing and live a more meaningful life. (Contra Costa County)

### **Vietnam Veteran Receives Overdue Bronze Star**

Jeffrey Spratt of Yountville earned a Bronze Star for his honorable service during the Vietnam War. However, the medal was never presented nor recorded on his DD-214 discharge papers. Working with the Napa CVSO, Spratt was able to correct his DD-214 to accurately reflect the medals he was awarded. In addition to the Bronze Star, it was found he was also eligible for the Vietnam Service Medal with Four Stars, and the Machine Gun-Expert Medal. Spratt was presented with his decorations by fellow Vietnam veteran, Congressman Mike Thompson, which was reported in the

local newspaper, raising awareness of this important issue. (Napa County)



Vietnam veteran Chester Alfred Crumm receives his diploma from San Bernardino County Veterans Service Officer Frank Guevara (left), and San Bernardino County Superintendent Ted Alejandre.

### **Homeless Veteran Helped**

A widowed Marine Corps Vietnam veteran visited the Kern CVSO office at the encouragement of his son. He had never previously filed a federal VA claim, nor enrolled in the VA Healthcare System. A Veterans Service Representative (VSR) began the interview process to see if the veteran was eligible for any benefits. When the VSR asked for the veteran's current address, the daughter-in-law responded, "He lives in a cave." The veteran was literally living in a cave just outside the mountain community of Kernville. The VSR

enrolled the veteran in the VA Healthcare System and submitted a claim for several conditions, including PTSD, hearing loss and Tinnitus. Ultimately, the veteran was granted a 100% service-connected disability and is receiving regular PTSD therapy. He is now remarried and has an actual home. (Kern County)

### **Discharge Upgrade and Compensation Claim**

While meeting with a veteran, a Northern California CVSO discovered that the veteran was discharged with an "Other Than Honorable" (OTH) discharge. The CVSO offered to assist the veteran with a discharge upgrade request. The veteran attended a Discharge Board hearing, and the Board subsequently upgraded the veteran's discharge status to "Under Honorable Conditions (General)." This allowed the veteran to file a claim with the VA, and he was awarded a service-connected disability rating of 60% and received a \$14,000 retroactive payment. When the CVSO was informed by

the VA of this decision, the veteran could not be located. Undeterred, the CVSO knew that the veteran was accessing services at the Reno VA Medical Center and was able to locate him at a shelter in Reno to inform him of his benefits. (Plumas County)

### Going the Extra Mile for Widow of Veteran with PTSD

A widow visited the Santa Clara CVSO office after her husband passed away — he was killed in a farming accident.

Her husband had a 100% VA service-connected disability rating and the CVSO found that he was service-connected for PTSD. His research also showed that severe cases of PTSD often bring periods of blackout. After reviewing the police reports and obtaining detailed statements from the widow and the veteran's doctor, the CVSO concluded that the veteran's farming accident occurred during a period of PTSD induced blackout.

The CVSO filed a successful Dependency and Indemnity

Compensation claim on behalf of the widow, who was granted all benefits due to the service-connected death of her husband. (Santa Clara County)



Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks presents Veterans Day Proclamation to Ventura CVSO Mike McManus. Board of Supervisor members join local veterans for the presentation.

### Satisfied Veterans in Riverside County

A thankful Vietnam veteran in Riverside County wrote a letter to the Riverside County CVSO office thanking them not only for help with his VA claim, but also for their encouragement and guidance. The veteran had been homeless for 10 years and was

living in his vehicle in the desert. He also struggled with health and anger management issues. The CVSO assisted him with his disability claim and the veteran has used the funds to rent a place to live and pursue therapy. (Riverside County)



WWII veteran Carlos Holguin receives diploma from CVSO Frank Guevara, thanks to a partnership between the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools and the CVSO office that helps veterans receive the high school diplomas they missed while answering the call to service.

## THE CALIFORNIA MODEL FOR VETERANS SERVICES

The California model for providing veterans 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 California County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) 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.

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

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The California CVSO model epitomizes Governor Brown's oft 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 Veterans Affairs (USDVA) regional 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, their dependents and survivors. They do this across the entire spectrum of federal, state

and local benefits, including compensation and pension, vocational rehabilitation, medical services, 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.



Chris Bingham, Sonoma County CVSO and President of the CACVSO for 2014 and 2015. Chris is a retired military aviator who has served in both the US Air Force and the US Navy, and is rated as a Command Pilot.

This model has widespread success nationwide with 28 of the 50 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.

### 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, veterans 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.
- ★ 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 2015-16, the CVSO community brought in \$87 in new federal benefits.
- ★ The CVSO sits across the table from the veteran — eyeball to eyeball — so 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 an anonymous voice at the other end of a toll-free call.

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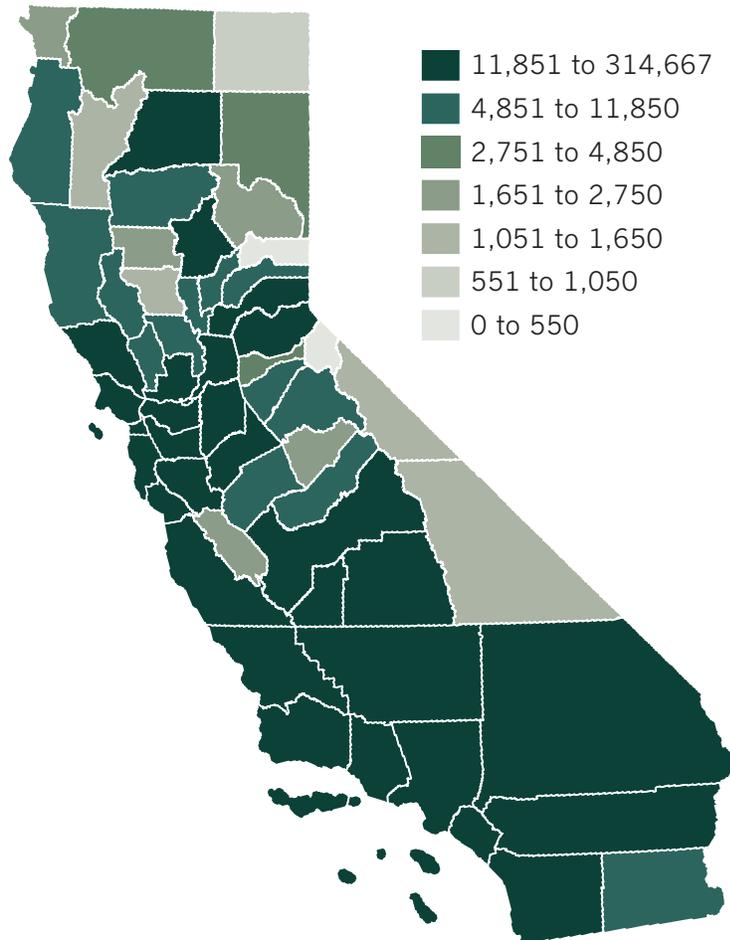
Mike McCoy's service allowed him to access benefits that could pay for the college education of his three children, Mike, Nick, and Kaitlyn.



## California veterans, by the numbers

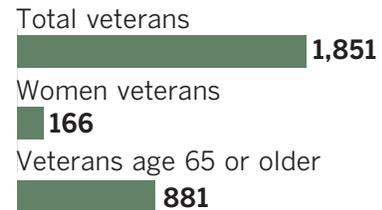
Veterans Day commemorates the day the WWI armistice went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. It's a celebration of the heroism and sacrifice of those who have fought for our country, particularly living veterans.

### Veteran population, 2015 (by county)



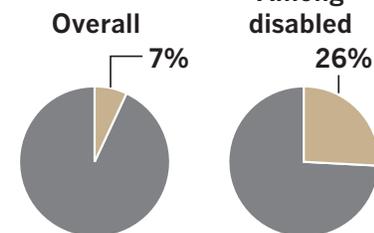
### Number of veterans

(in thousands)

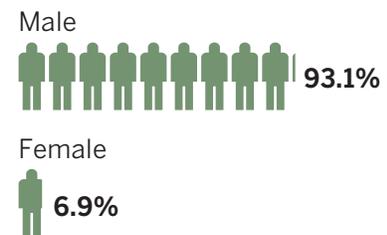


### Employment difficulties

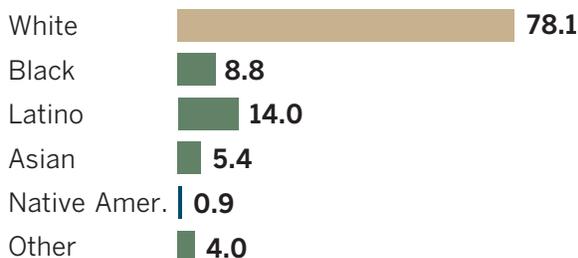
Percentage of veterans in poverty:



### Male vs. female



### Race/ethnicity among veterans (In percent)



### Facilities to treat veterans (as of 9/30/14)

VA hospitals	9
Community-based outpatient clinics	56
Vet centers	30
Regional Benefit Offices	3
National and state cemeteries	10
<b>Total state</b>	<b>108</b>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau's 2013 5-year American Community Survey. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

DOUG STEVENS Los Angeles Times

Disclaimer: The above numbers do not reflect the current population of California Veterans. According to the USDVA in 2016, estimates are total Veterans – 1,755,680, Women Veterans – 163,332. And numbers for facilities to treat veterans, currently there are 13 VA hospitals and 71 community-based outpatient clinics in California.



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

**THE SECRETARY**

A little more than a year ago, Governor Brown asked me to take the helm of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, "CalVet" as we like to call it. As I became knowledgeable about the operations of this Department, I witnessed firsthand the vital role the County Veteran Service Officers play in helping our Veterans transition from military service back to civilian life. The partnership we have between CalVet and our CVSOs has helped strengthen families, communities and this state. Together, this past fiscal year, we have brought \$487 million new federal benefits directly to our Veterans and their families. I truly believe, in the partnership we have formed, this is an outstanding example of how different levels of government can work together for the greater good of our citizens.

Now I ask, imagine what good we can accomplish if we harness the voices of our nearly two million Veterans in California. Imagine if we add the family members of our Veterans and service members to this number. We can take all of our specialized skills, combine them, and focus them on helping to create and sustain programs for the benefit of all our Veterans and their families.

That is how it should be with our Veterans and services – everything is interconnected. A Veteran is a whole person, but also part of a whole family, part of a whole community, as we are unified in our efforts to provide the supportive services our Veterans need and have earned – we are all part of the greater whole we call "California."

We must listen carefully to our Veterans and their families, and we must use best practices as we move forward, united as a multiplied force, so that we leave no Veteran behind here in California.

The team at CalVet and I share a special calling with all of you to serve our Veterans and their families and to build a stronger California.

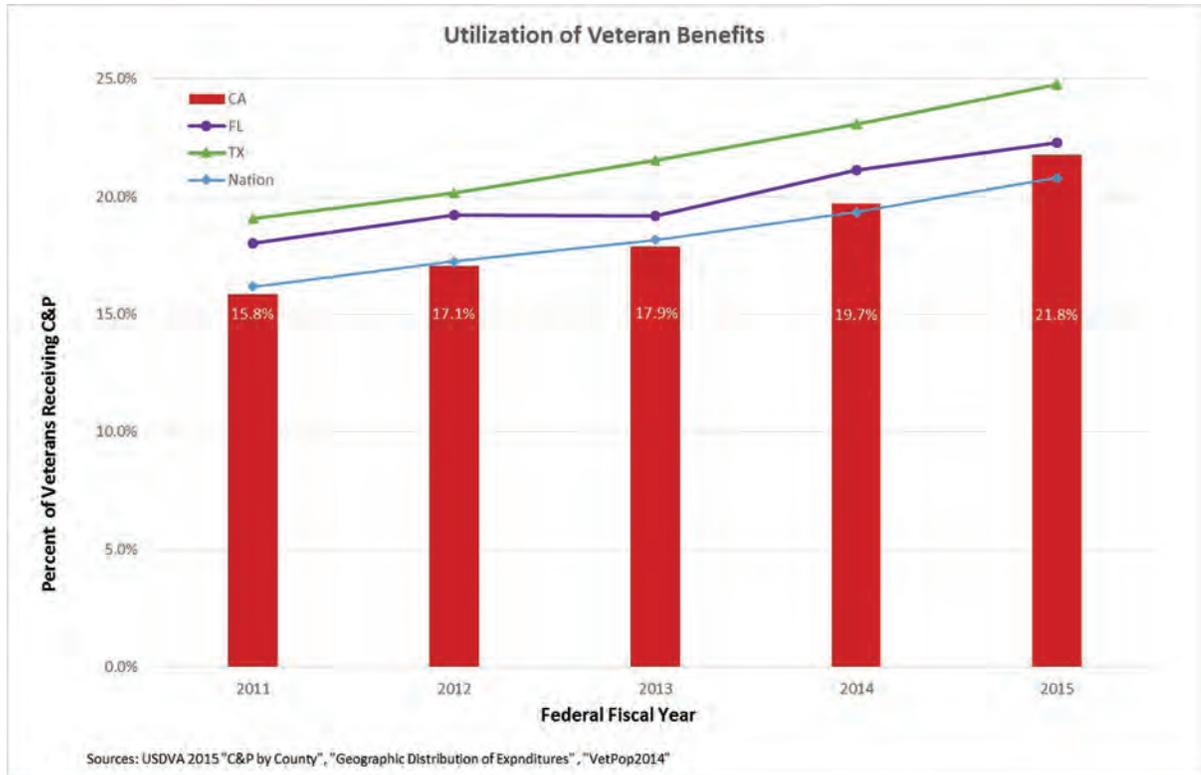
Thank you for all that you do each day.

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 veteran benefits, referred to as Compensation and Pension (C&P), 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 CalVet<sup>1</sup>, the Bureau of State Audits<sup>2</sup> and others<sup>3</sup>. 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 veterans service representatives 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 population and lower th(a)n average benefit participation rates."

Recently, subvention funding in support of CVSO operations was increased from \$2.6 million to \$5.6 million. 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.

	Veteran Population	C&P Beneficiaries	C&P Utilization Rate	C&P Dollars
California	1,802,446	392,381	21.8%	\$6,552,100,000
Florida	1,558,441	347,635	22.3%	\$5,626,995,000
Texas	1,675,262	415,248	24.8%	\$7,447,453,600
Nationwide	21,680,534	4,512,369	20.8%	\$75,787,356,200

The end result is that up to \$908 million in federal funding is lost annually, impacting approximately 54,000 veterans and their families.

**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 \$908 million 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.

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1 "Strategies to Improve California's Utilization of Veteran Benefits," report to the California State Legislature, March 15, 2007

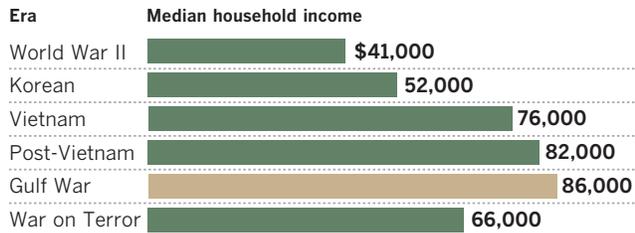
2 "California Department of Veterans Affairs: Although It Has Begun to Increase Its Outreach Efforts and to Coordinate With Other Entities, It Needs to Improve Its Strategic Planning Process, and Its CalVet Home Loan Program Is Not Designed to Address the Housing Needs of Some Veterans," October 2009,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

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

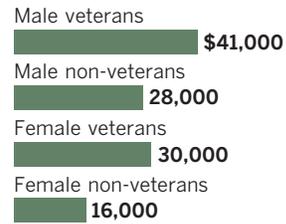
## CALIFORNIA VETERANS, BY THE NUMBERS

Veterans Day traces its roots to World War I, commemorating the day the armistice went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. It celebrates the heroism and sacrifice of those who have fought for our country, particularly the living veterans. There are roughly 23 million veterans living in the U.S., with some 2 million in California. Here's a statistical profile of some of the key characteristics that make up the state's veteran population.

### Median income among veterans (In dollars)

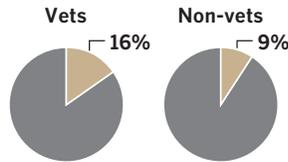


### Income by gender (In dollars)



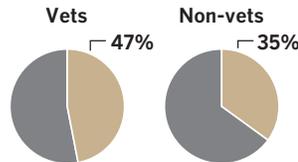
### Difficulty working

More veterans report difficulty at work because of a physical or emotional problem.



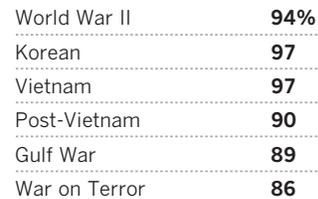
### No wages

Nearly half of veterans living in California report having no wage income.

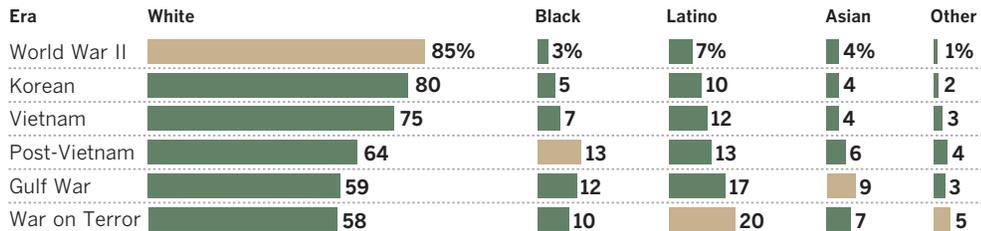


### Male percentage of the veteran population

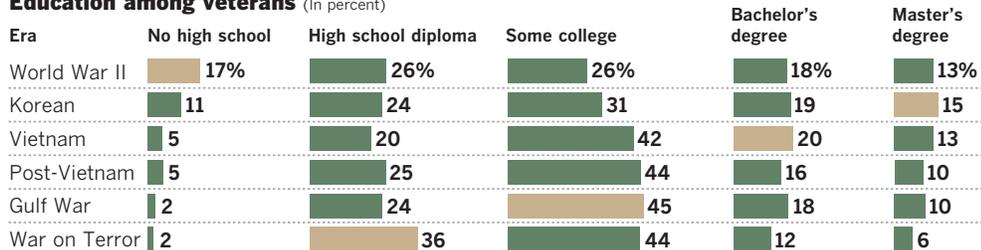
(By conflict)



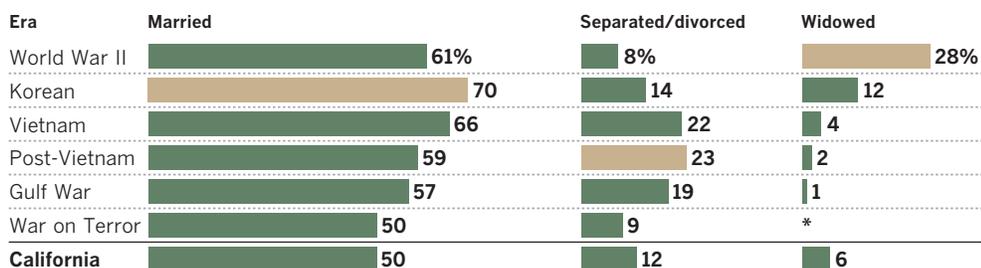
### Race/ethnicity among veterans (In percent)



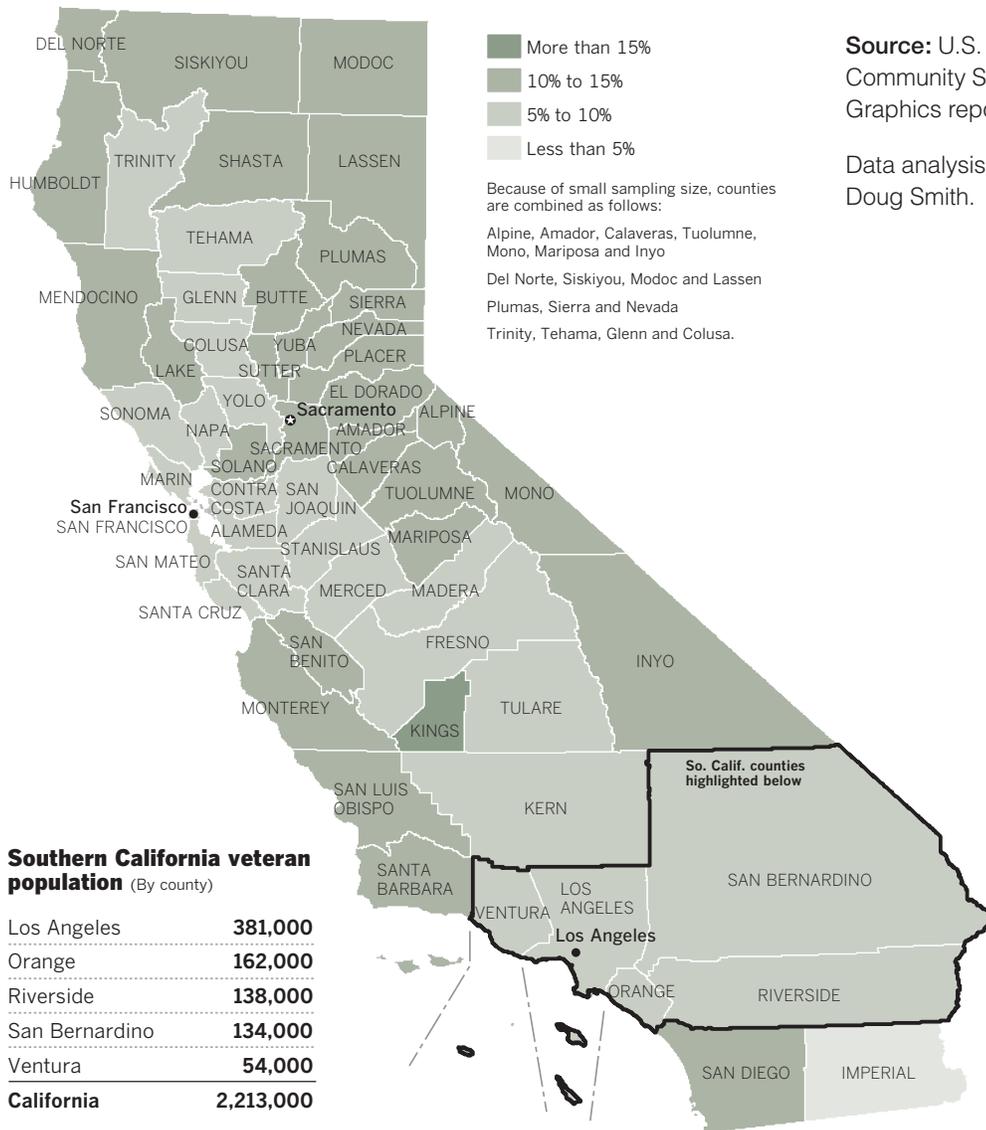
### Education among veterans (In percent)



### Marital status of veterans (In percent)



**Percentage of population over 18 who are veterans** (By county)



**Southern California veteran population** (By county)

Los Angeles	<b>381,000</b>
Orange	<b>162,000</b>
Riverside	<b>138,000</b>
San Bernardino	<b>134,000</b>
Ventura	<b>54,000</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>2,213,000</b>

**Percentage of veterans from past U.S. conflicts** (Southern California counties)

County	WWII	Korean	Vietnam	Post-Vietnam	Gulf War	War on Terror
Los Angeles	14	20	34	17	8	7
Orange	13	22	35	15	9	6
Riverside	13	21	29	16	12	9
San Bernardino	8	14	26	19	13	20
Ventura	11	16	33	15	11	15
<b>California</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>

**Notes:** All numbers rounded to the nearest 1,000. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. \*Less than 0.5%

Eras: Through 1946 (WWII); 1947-Feb. 1961 (Korean); Mar. 1961-Apr. 1975 (Vietnam); May 1975-Jul. 1990 (Post-Vietnam); Aug. 1990-Aug. 2001 (Gulf War), Sep. 2001-present (War on Terror). Recent regional explainer graphics are available at [latimes.com/localgraphics](http://latimes.com/localgraphics).

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey public use microdata sample. Graphics reporting by Jia-Rui Chong.

Data analysis by Sandra Poindexter and Doug Smith.

Source: *Los Angeles Times*

# SERVING VETERANS ACROSS *California*

CalVet and the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers partnering to assist California's Veterans and unified in providing all of the supportive services our Veterans have earned.



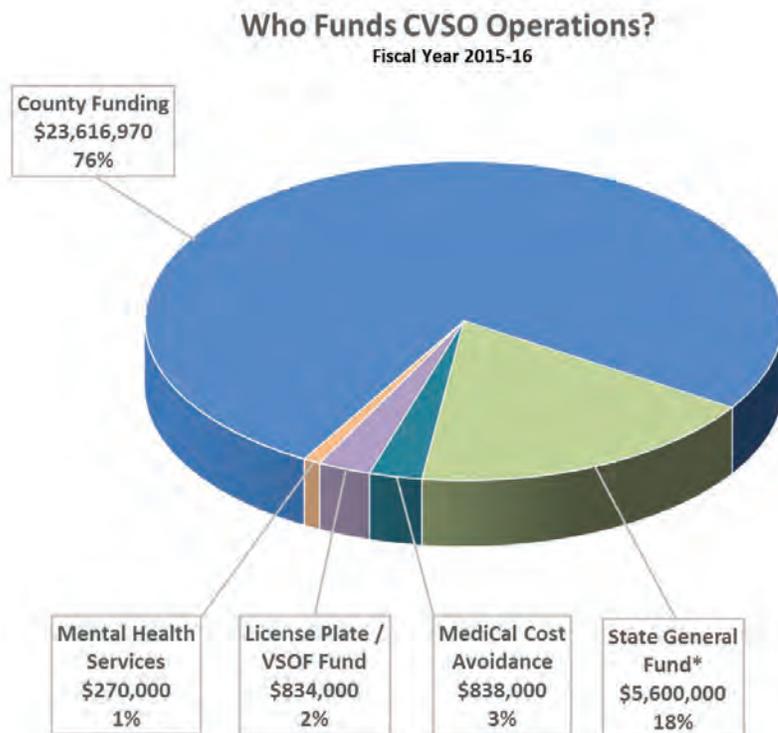
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV](http://WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV)



## CVSO FUNDING

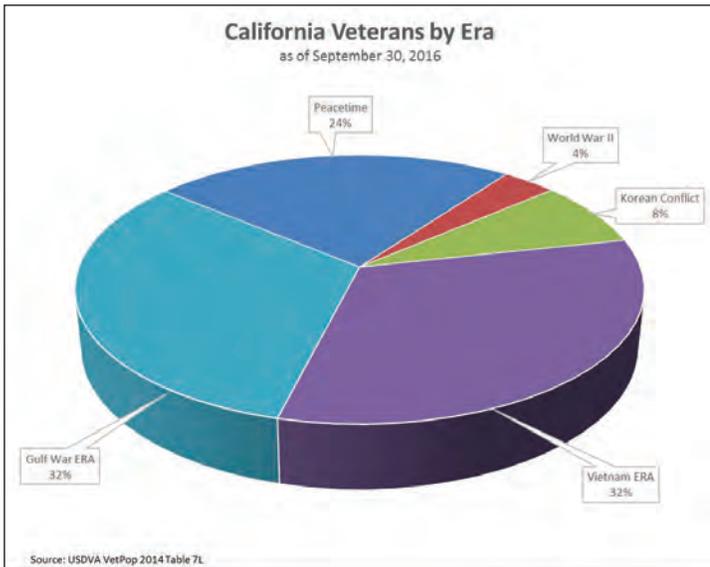
The cost of maintaining a CVSO is primarily a county general fund expense; however, counties with an established CVSO receive some state funds to supplement county funding. It is important to emphasize that, while state general funds and federal pass-through funds distributed by CalVet assist counties 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 CalVet, in accordance with the California Code of Regulations.



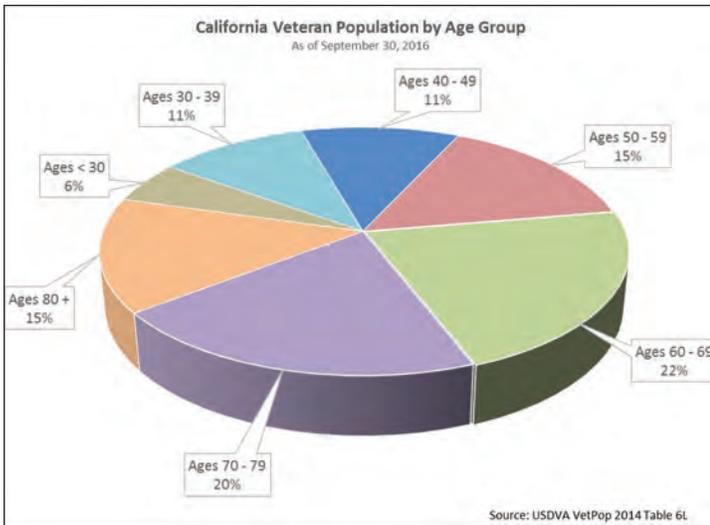
\* General Fund increased to \$5.6 million ongoing beginning in FY 2015-16

While every funding dollar is gratefully accepted and well spent by CVSOs, increased state funding could afford CVSOs the ability to accomplish so much more. Even with the recent funding increases, the state is still not meeting its own goal to fund 50% of CVSO operations. As a result, CVSOs are only able to meet a portion of the total demand for providing assistance to veterans and their families.

## WHO ARE CALIFORNIA'S ALMOST 1.9 MILLION VETERANS



Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans comprise the largest number of veterans in California. Gulf War-era veterans extend from the Gulf War in 1991 continuing through today's wars. Peacetime-era veterans are from those periods between congressional approved periods of war, such as post WWII, the Cold War and after the Korean and Vietnam wars.



Vietnam veterans and Vietnam-era veterans make up 42% of veterans in age group 60-79.

## California Veteran Population Estimates by Race & Ethnicity

As of September 30th of each year  
Estimates Rounded to 1,000

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Hispanic or Latino of Any Race</b>	296,000 16%	296,000 17%	296,000 17%	296,000 18%	296,000 18%	296,000 19%	296,000 19%	296,000 20%	295,000 20%	295,000 21%	294,000 21%
<b>White Non-Hispanic</b>	1,175,000 65%	1,133,000 65%	1,093,000 64%	1,054,000 63%	1,017,000 63%	981,000 62%	947,000 61%	913,000 61%	881,000 60%	850,000 59%	821,000 59%
<b>White alone</b>	1,367,921 76%	1,325,002 75%	1,283,641 75%	1,243,051 75%	1,203,605 74%	1,165,433 74%	1,128,153 73%	1,091,966 72%	1,056,717 72%	1,022,477 71%	989,304 71%
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	170,000 9%	168,000 10%	165,000 10%	162,000 10%	160,000 10%	157,000 10%	155,000 10%	152,000 10%	150,000 10%	147,000 10%	144,000 10%
<b>American Indian &amp; Alaska Native alone</b>	20,000 1%	20,000 1%	20,000 1%	19,000 1%	19,000 1%	18,000 1%	18,000 1%	17,000 1%	17,000 1%	17,000 1%	16,000 1%
<b>Asian alone</b>	104,000 6%	103,000 6%	101,000 6%	100,000 6%	99,000 6%	98,000 6%	98,000 6%	97,000 6%	96,000 7%	96,000 7%	96,000 7%
<b>Native Hawaiian &amp; Pacific Islander alone</b>	8,000 0%	8,000 0%	8,000 0%	8,000 0%	8,000 0%	8,000 1%	8,000 1%	8,000 1%	8,000 1%	8,000 1%	8,000 1%
<b>Other or Multiple Race</b>	132,000 7%	132,000 8%	133,000 8%	134,000 8%	135,000 8%	137,000 9%	139,000 9%	141,000 9%	143,000 10%	146,000 10%	148,000 11%

Source: USDVA VetPop2014

## VETERAN STATISTICS BY COUNTY

The county veteran statistics on the following pages 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,” shows 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 2015 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 in 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 fiscal year 2015-16 that are directly attributable to the activities and efforts of the CVSOs. In total, the CVSOs accounted for over \$487 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 — the “what have you done for me lately” metric.



Two veterans receive their VETERAN bus passes from the Tehama County Veterans Service Office.

**VETERAN STATISTICS BY COUNTY**

Veteran Statistics By County									
Total Compensation & Pension (C&P) Utilization by County									
County	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)	Total New Awards FY 2015-16 (Note 7)	Average New Award FY 2015-16	County
LOS ANGELES	301,821	Large	56,619	18.8%	\$994,740,000	\$17,569	\$41,287,154	\$15,229	LOS ANGELES
SAN DIEGO	227,463	Large	74,471	32.7%	\$1,055,348,000	\$14,171	\$27,027,038	\$12,635	SAN DIEGO
RIVERSIDE	134,794	Large	34,127	25.3%	\$580,366,000	\$17,006	\$33,249,599	\$11,561	RIVERSIDE
ORANGE	121,737	Large	20,948	17.2%	\$347,556,000	\$16,591	\$18,409,268	\$11,549	ORANGE
SAN BERNARDINO	112,208	Large	25,246	22.5%	\$416,030,000	\$16,479	\$54,922,810	\$11,104	SAN BERNARDINO
SACRAMENTO	87,006	Large	18,564	21.3%	\$330,417,000	\$17,799	\$6,459,888	\$14,043	SACRAMENTO
SANTA CLARA	58,490	Medium	8,673	14.8%	\$161,046,000	\$18,569	\$17,745,910	\$15,663	SANTA CLARA
ALAMEDA	56,608	Medium	9,966	17.6%	\$169,896,000	\$17,048	\$4,499,399	\$30,608	ALAMEDA
CONTRA COSTA	53,369	Medium	9,402	17.6%	\$132,378,000	\$16,207	\$17,796,477	\$10,838	CONTRA COSTA
KERN	47,178	Medium	10,174	21.6%	\$160,573,000	\$15,783	\$14,960,426	\$9,106	KERN
FRESNO	44,041	Medium	9,693	22.0%	\$163,450,000	\$16,863	\$8,600,849	\$15,553	FRESNO
VENTURA	42,383	Medium	8,533	20.1%	\$146,151,000	\$17,128	\$11,531,421	\$10,717	VENTURA
SAN JOAQUIN	35,495	Medium	6,570	18.5%	\$122,851,000	\$18,699	\$12,724,825	\$14,728	SAN JOAQUIN
SOLANO	33,597	Medium	11,826	35.2%	\$193,793,000	\$16,387	\$28,805,258	\$15,545	SOLANO
PLACER	30,146	Medium	5,155	17.1%	\$93,558,000	\$18,149	\$9,656,735	\$16,423	PLACER
SONOMA	28,599	Medium	4,848	17.0%	\$93,628,000	\$19,313	\$14,481,602	\$10,547	SONOMA
SAN MATEO	28,121	Medium	3,803	13.5%	\$67,704,000	\$17,803	\$8,389,464	\$17,052	SAN MATEO
STANISLAUS	25,886	Medium	4,943	19.1%	\$97,576,000	\$19,740	\$10,803,933	\$13,080	STANISLAUS
SAN FRANCISCO	24,957	Medium	4,137	16.6%	\$70,971,000	\$17,155	\$10,682,550	\$8,492	SAN FRANCISCO
SANTA BARBARA	23,098	Medium	4,963	21.5%	\$62,094,000	\$16,541	\$8,328,869	\$12,413	SANTA BARBARA
SAN LUIS OBISPO	20,983	Medium	3,571	17.0%	\$60,830,000	\$17,034	\$6,093,334	\$14,204	SAN LUIS OBISPO
MONTEREY	18,992	Small	4,876	25.7%	\$97,800,000	\$20,057	\$8,480,884	\$18,437	MONTEREY
TULARE	18,253	Small	5,054	27.7%	\$72,865,000	\$14,417	\$5,650,211	\$8,248	TULARE
BUTTE	17,696	Small	3,316	18.7%	\$63,370,000	\$19,110	\$11,717,945	\$11,625	BUTTE
SHASTA	16,404	Small	4,059	24.7%	\$89,502,000	\$22,050	\$5,366,856	\$5,885	SHASTA
EL DORADO	15,508	Small	2,709	17.5%	\$47,944,000	\$17,698	\$3,339,592	\$18,975	EL DORADO
KINGS	12,795	Small	3,317	25.9%	\$37,515,000	\$11,310	\$3,985,834	\$9,163	KINGS
MARIN	12,379	Small	1,586	12.8%	\$27,433,000	\$17,297	\$2,223,056	\$21,376	MARIN
SANTA CRUZ	11,481	Small	2,069	18.0%	\$44,972,000	\$21,736	\$7,877,341	\$17,389	SANTA CRUZ
MERCED	11,082	Small	2,478	22.4%	\$40,406,000	\$16,306	\$3,318,565	\$7,076	MERCED
HUMBOLDT	10,259	Small	2,226	21.7%	\$43,290,000	\$19,447	\$6,248,178	\$9,568	HUMBOLDT
NAPA	9,709	Small	1,655	17.0%	\$30,041,000	\$18,152	\$4,409,362	\$17,852	NAPA
YOLO	9,572	Small	1,991	20.8%	\$32,408,000	\$16,277	\$1,855,041	\$8,172	YOLO
NEVADA	9,146	Small	1,841	20.1%	\$34,388,000	\$18,679	\$1,976,576	\$27,452	NEVADA
MADERA	8,433	Small	1,919	22.8%	\$31,134,000	\$16,224	\$6,526,054	\$19,082	MADERA
IMPERIAL	7,641	Small	1,902	24.9%	\$26,765,000	\$14,072	\$1,793,386	\$13,484	IMPERIAL

Total Compensation & Pension (C&P) Utilization by County							New Awards Attributable to CVSOs FY 2015-16		
County	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)	Total New Awards FY 2015-16 (Note 7)	Average New Award FY 2015-16 (includes Sutter)	County
SUTTER	6,804	Very Small	1,768	26.0%	\$28,740,000	\$16,256	See Yuba		SUTTER
LAKE	6,602	Very Small	1,479	22.4%	\$27,634,000	\$18,684	\$6,582,449	\$8,895	LAKE
TEHAMA	6,573	Very Small	1,094	16.6%	\$16,440,000	\$15,027	\$2,333,236	\$8,454	TEHAMA
YUBA	6,518	Very Small	1,943	29.8%	\$30,169,000	\$15,527	\$11,037,392	\$10,993	YUBA
MENDOCINO	6,421	Very Small	1,354	21.1%	\$28,514,000	\$21,059	\$4,274,021	\$10,579	MENDOCINO
TUOLUMNE	6,262	Very Small	1,074	17.2%	\$22,400,000	\$20,857	\$4,798,348	\$12,864	TUOLUMNE
CALAVERAS	5,630	Very Small	894	15.9%	\$16,296,000	\$18,228	\$1,778,166	\$12,015	CALAVERAS
AMADOR	4,306	Very Small	622	14.4%	\$10,992,000	\$17,672	\$2,030,898	\$8,986	AMADOR
SISKIYOU	4,285	Very Small	956	22.3%	\$16,569,000	\$17,332	\$1,528,115	\$5,577	SISKIYOU
LASSEN	3,615	Very Small	534	14.8%	\$9,254,000	\$17,330	\$1,262,262	\$14,183	LASSEN
SAN BENITO	2,625	Very Small	585	22.3%	\$11,911,000	\$20,361	\$5,093,891	\$20,963	SAN BENITO
DEL NORTE	2,563	Very Small	629	24.5%	\$12,186,000	\$19,374	\$70,778	\$12,043	DEL NORTE
MARIPOSA	2,143	Very Small	394	18.4%	\$6,642,000	\$16,858	\$61,289	\$7,661	MARIPOSA
PLUMAS	2,003	Very Small	403	20.1%	\$6,634,000	\$16,462	\$839,455	\$9,026	PLUMAS
GLENN	1,749	Very Small	291	16.6%	\$5,682,000	\$19,526	\$616,826	\$23,724	GLENN
TRINITY	1,547	Very Small	286	18.5%	\$5,875,000	\$20,542	\$1,574,815	\$11,752	INYO
INYO	1,519	Very Small	290	19.1%	\$5,769,000	\$19,893	\$294,115	\$22,624	TRINITY
MONO	1,281	Very Small	135	10.5%	\$1,401,000	\$10,378	\$69,107	\$11,518	MONO
COLUSA	1,205	Very Small	176	14.6%	\$3,608,000	\$20,500	\$624,038	\$16,866	COLUSA
MODOC	960	Very Small	187	19.5%	\$3,500,000	\$18,717	\$335,658	\$19,745	MODOC
SIERRA	377	Very Small	57	15.1%	\$919,000	\$16,123	\$20,454	\$5,113	SIERRA
ALPINE	129	Very Small	note 8	N/A	\$176,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	ALPINE
STATEWIDE	1,802,447		392,381	21.8%	\$6,552,100,000	\$16,698	\$487,150,998	\$12,231	STATEWIDE

**Notes:**

1. Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2015, 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 2015 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 2015 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 2015-16. They do not include any awards attributable to other veterans service organizations or individual filers.
8. Less than 10 recipients not reported by USDVA.

## **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 CVSOS 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 CVSOS can assist in applying for any of these benefits.

## 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, CVSOSs 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 CVSOS staff's time is spent in providing direct claims and case management services to veterans and their families.

Activity	Percent of Average Day
<b>Claims</b> (including filing claims on behalf of beneficiaries for direct payments to veterans and their families, such as compensation, pension, disability indemnification, etc.)	52%
<b>Case management</b> (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)	27%
<b>Information &amp; Referrals</b> (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.)	23%
<b>Outreach and Advocacy</b> (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.)	9%

## **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 Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 2586 (Parra), creating Penal Code Section 1170.9. Under this statute, veterans with service-related mental health issues may be sentenced to therapy (usually by the federal Veterans Administration) in lieu of incarceration. Further, upon completion of treatment programs, they may have charges reduced, records expunged, and rights restored, and they do not have to list this criminal conviction on job applications. **PC 1170.9 is used as the legal basis for the state's network of Veterans Treatment Courts (VTCs), although it can be implemented in any courtroom.**

VTCs serve not only to turn around the lives of troubled veterans and active duty military, but also to improve public safety via reduced rates of recidivism. Although data is scarce, VTC recidivism is documented in San Diego County at 0% and in Orange County at 10.5%. These results are consistent with rates of 2% to 20% in VTCs across the country, and they compared favorably to California's statewide recidivism rates — about 50% for misdemeanors and 70% for felonies.

**VTCs in California are not mandated and receive no allocated state funding. Despite VTC's savings of criminal justice costs, numerous counties are holding back establishing VTCs as they seek funding grants.**

The first VTC in the nation was established in Buffalo, NY, in January 2008. It was followed that year by two California VTCs, in Orange and Santa Clara counties. Today, there are 31 VTCs in the state, spread across 29 counties (six started in 2016) — meaning half of California's 58 counties now have VTCs. More significantly, the 29 counties with VTCs contain 86% of the state's veteran population.

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*VTCs serve not only to turn around the lives of troubled veterans and active duty military, but also to improve public safety via reduced rates of recidivism.*

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A new development in veterans alternative justice occurred in 2014, when SB 1227 (Hancock) established Penal Code Section 1001.80, allowing diversion for troubled veterans accused of misdemeanors. By this statute, qualifying veterans who complete therapy can have their charges dismissed, thereby exiting with no criminal record. Some counties administer PC

1001.80 in their VTCs, while others have established special court calendars for that purpose. Los Angeles and San Diego counties, with their large veteran populations, have established a number of such calendars. A veteran does not have to go to a VTC to use the diversion programs available under PC 1170.9 and 1001.80.

**In 2016, the California Veterans Legal Task Force published the results of a survey of 20 VTCs across the state. For more information on this survey and other veterans' justice-related matters, visit [www.cvltf.org](http://www.cvltf.org).**

### 2016 CAPITOL CORNER



CACVSO presents 2015 Legislator of the Year Award to Senator Richard Roth (D-Riverside). (L to R): Pete Conaty, Legislative Advocate; Chris Bingham, CVSO Sonoma County; Senator Richard Roth (D-Riverside); Ted Puntillo, CVSO Solano County; Grant Gautsche, CVSO Riverside County.



CACVSO members visit State Capitol to educate legislators on veterans issues and deliver Annual Report.



Presentation of CACVSO Lifetime Achievement Award to Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins (D-San Diego). (L to R): George Wiley, Special Assistant to the Speaker; Ted Puntillo, CVSO Solano County; Chris Bingham, CVSO Sonoma County; Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins (D-San Diego); Michael Piepenburg, Veterans Service Representative San Diego County; Mike McManus, CVSO Ventura County; Pete Conaty, Legislative Advocate.



(L to R): Pete Conaty, Legislative Advocate; Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-Visalia); Scott Holwell, CVSO Kings County.

## **MOTOMU NAKASAKO LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2016**

*The CACVSO has chosen California State Senator Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber) and Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) each to receive the Motomu Nakasako Legislator of the Year Award for 2016.*

The Motomu Nakasako Award is named after “Mote” Nakasako, a Los Angeles County Veterans Service Officer who was constantly involved in legislation to improve the lives of veterans at the local, state and federal levels. He was a decorated member of the Army’s 442nd Regimental Combat Team, one of World War II’s most decorated units. Mr. Nakasako joined the Army and volunteered for combat duty from the Heart Mountain Internment Camp in Wyoming.



### **Senator Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber)**

In 2016, Senator Jim Nielsen was Chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. He also serves as Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on the Budget. Nielsen first fought for CVSO funding in the 2011 budget while serving in the Assembly — he was presented his first CVSO Legislator of the Year award for those efforts. Nielsen’s knowledge and support of the CVSO funding issue has allowed him to articulate and champion the merits of CVSOs during deliberations of full budget committees and also during Joint Conference

Committee. Every year since then, in both the Assembly and the Senate, he has continued to push for proper resources for CVSOs.

Senator Nielsen has authored many bills to help veterans and their families during his tenure on both the Assembly and Senate Veterans Committees. Most recently, he authored SB 980, a bill to reform, update, and standardize the state codes regulating veterans homes.



### **Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks)**

Since Assemblywoman Irwin was elected in November 2014, she has been a committed supporter of veterans issues. Selected by Assembly leadership to Chair the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs, she hit the ground running and immediately took up the fight for increased and permanent funding for CVSOs by introducing AB 171, which sought to create a suitable, permanent funding level for CVSOs. She has also introduced legislation to address military suicide, military and veterans legal aid, work for

warriors, the Governor’s Military Council, and CalVet oversight.

She is also an appointee to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. In her district, she has established a Veteran Advisory Board to routinely meet with the local CVSO, veterans service organizations, and other

veteran advocates to gain insight, recommendations, and information on issues facing the county's veterans.

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

- 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
- 2012 - Senator Ted Lieu and Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla
- 2011 - Assemblyman Jim Nielsen and Congressman Jerry McNerney
- 2010 - Senator Lou Correa

### **Recipient of CACVSO Lifetime Achievement Award**

- 2011 - Assemblyman Paul Cook
- 2015 - Assemblywoman Toni Atkins

## **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. Over the years, they have worked with the Legislature and the Administration on improving the lives of their clients. Since 2001, Pete Conaty and Associates has represented the CACVSO and California's veterans at the State Capitol.



### **About Pete Conaty**

In 1986, after a 21-year military career including two tours in Vietnam — where he was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge and the Purple Heart — Pete retired from the US Army, having risen from the rank of Private to Lieutenant Colonel. After his military career, Pete became involved with veterans and military issues at the State Capitol and Washington DC. During this time, he worked at the California State Assembly for 10 years in a variety of positions before establishing his governmental advocacy firm, Pete Conaty and Associates, in 1996. Since 2001, he has provided veterans service organizations with expert, knowledgeable and effective guidance in Washington DC and the California State Legislature. Over the last 20 years, Pete has worked on over 1,100 veterans and military legislative bills at both the state and national capitols. He is known as “Mr. Veteran” at the State Capitol. In 2010 and 2015, he was awarded the CalVet Secretary’s Award for his “invaluable contributions to California veterans.” He has received numerous awards for his advocacy on behalf of California’s military and veteran populations.



**About Dana Nichol**

After serving successful internships in the Assembly and for Pete Conaty and Associates, Dana Nichol joined Pete Conaty and Associates in 2004 as an Associate Lobbyist. During his legislative internship, Dana worked for Assemblyman Cogdill on Rural Caucus issues. Dana received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Government at California State University, Sacramento.

**Pete Conaty and Associates is a state-certified Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE).**

**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 PRIORITIES 2017/2018**

### **Additional Local Assistance Funding for CVSOs**

1. Support efforts to educate the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the public on the importance and value of County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs). The eventual goal is to fully fund CVSOs by permanently appropriating the full \$11 million in local assistance funding as reflected in Military and Veterans Code Section 972.1(d). Current State funding is now at \$5.6 million annually.

### **California's Eight Veterans Homes**

2. Support legislation 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 Veteran 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, 2017/2018**

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 expand current law to allow local jurisdictions the option of waiving building and inspection permit fees for veterans with service-connected disabilities, in order to assist them in making Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-type modifications to their homes.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Support legislation that would change state laws so that members of the military and veterans do not have to plead guilty to Driving Under the Influence (DUI) to receive treatment, by changing current motor vehicle code.
8. 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.
9. Support legislation that would reduce property tax assessment on veterans service organizations' posts and chapters.
10. 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.
11. 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."
12. Support legislation that would criminalize the vandalism and destruction of veterans', police, fire and first responders' memorials, monuments and graves.
13. 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.
14. Support legislation that would expand Prop. 63 mental health funding support for veterans suffering from homelessness and mental health issues.
15. Fund state-sponsored veterans' resource centers at state community colleges and universities (CSU and UC systems).
16. 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.
17. Support legislation that would help educate doctors and coroners of the importance of including other significant conditions contributing to the death of a veteran on the death certificate, such as suicide or a death caused by medical condition caused by war time service.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. Support the legislative priorities of the state veterans service organizations that are in-line with our own legislative priorities.

**CACVSO Top Federal Legislative Priorities, 2017/2018**

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, 2017/2018**

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](http://www.calvet.ca.gov) or calling **(844) 737-8838**.

To schedule an appointment at a DMV, visit [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov) or call **(800) 777-0133**.



[www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov)

**CALVET**  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



*California*

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[www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov)

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## VETERANS DESIGNATION ON THE CALIFORNIA'S DRIVERS LICENSE

### *An Unqualified Success Story*

Nearly 9,000 more of California's 1.84 million veterans are now receiving federal veterans' benefits that they were unaware they were eligible for, as a result of legislation introduced by Assemblymember Jim Frazier (D-Oakley) in 2014.

To date, these benefits total over \$11 million in monthly payments to California veterans. This is in addition to over \$6 million in retroactive payments to these same veterans.

But how did this happen? How are California veterans able to file these claims?

California was almost the last state in the nation to create a program to allow veterans to have a designation on the driver's license. And by adding a requirement to the program, County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) are helping these veterans file claims. 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.

These California veterans are receiving the federal benefits that they earned while serving in their country's military forces during war time, and in some cases, peace time.



Veteran 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 (C&P) must be applied for by the veteran — and each veteran's case is different, depending on a multitude of factors, such as locations of service, physical or mental injuries received, and a long list of congressional and court decisions concerning military service. The federal laws concerning veterans benefits are contained in Title 38 and comprise of more than 16,000 pages of small print.

To date, over 42,000 California veterans have obtained the “veteran” driver's license since November 2015.

Veterans requesting the DMV driver's license form must visit their local county veterans service office to obtain the form. This visit most often is their first visit to a county veterans service office, and allows the CVSO to check the military service of the veteran. Because CVSOs are trained to quickly 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.

Because this program is only slightly more than one year old, it will continue to grow and expand as more veterans learn about the program.

This program is a joint venture with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

The program honors the military service of California's 1.84 million veterans, including those who are still serving.

Additionally, the “veteran” designation often means a business can easily confirm the veteran status when offering discounts to veterans.



Tehama County CVSO Kelly Osborne (right) participates in roll-out of the free yearly bus pass for veterans program.

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# CalTAP

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