



# Service, Strength and Advocacy

**DELIVERING RESULTS FOR VETERANS  
AND CALIFORNIA FOR 80 YEARS**

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

**ANNUAL REPORT 2025**



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**CALVET**  
California Department  
of Veterans Affairs



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been my honor to serve as President of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) for the past two years. During this time, CACVSO has continued to demonstrate that California's county-based veterans service delivery system is a national model – built on access, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to those who have served our nation.

County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) operate where policy meets people. In offices large and small, often under extraordinary conditions, CVSOs serve as the frontline connection between veterans and the benefits, services, and community networks that support long-term success after military service. Beyond benefits advocacy, CVSOs connect veterans to employment, education, health care, family support, and opportunities that foster purpose, stability, and belonging. What makes this system exceptional is not only its scale, but its reliability. When veterans seek help, CVSOs are there.



Despite these measurable successes, California continues to experience a decline in its veteran population. With nearly 30 military installations, approximately 157,000 active-duty service members, and more than 52,000 Reserve and National Guard members currently living in the state, California must strengthen its efforts to attract and retain veterans and military retirees after they complete their service.

Addressing affordability, access to care, and long-term quality of life will be essential to reversing this trend. In 2026, CACVSO will focus on strengthening county veterans service offices, protecting veterans from fraud, expanding property tax relief for disabled veterans, and securing sustained mental health funding. These priorities reflect a simple belief: when we invest in veterans, we strengthen communities.

CACVSO remains committed to partnership with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Together, and alongside Secretary Lindsey Sin, we are committed to ensuring every veteran in California is connected, protected, and respected.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David West".

David West  
CACVSO President



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

**THE SECRETARY**

California's veterans and their families deserve the very best. They've sacrificed so much for all of us, and the freedoms we enjoy today exist because of their service.

As Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), I offer my heartfelt thanks to every County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO). Your work is often the closest, most personal support veterans and their families receive. You meet with them at important and sometimes challenging moments in their lives, and you help them navigate a system that can be confusing and overwhelming. Your compassion and expertise make a real difference and are at the forefront of reinforcing commitments and promises made to care for those who have borne the battle.

The partnership between CalVet and CVSOs is something we are deeply proud of. It's a model for the rest of the country. It's a reminder that when we work together, we can build a stronger, more connected community-based network of care for those who served.

Our missions align because we share the same purpose: to advocate for veterans, educate them about their benefits, and make sure they receive the support they have earned. This shared commitment touches veterans' lives in every corner of California and helps them thrive.

We know that for many veterans, the CVSO office is their first stop when they're looking for help or simply trying to understand what support is available. You meet them where they are. You guide them through forms, appointments, and processes that might otherwise feel out of reach.

During the 2024-25 Fiscal Year, CVSOs filed more than 316,000 claims and secured \$687 million in new or increased federal benefits for veterans and their families. This is a new record and \$109 million more than the previous fiscal year. These are not just numbers. Each awarded claim represents an individual, family member, or survivor receiving relief, stability, and recognition. This extraordinary impact reflects your dedication to outreach, advocacy, and claims work in communities throughout the state.

It also reflects the strength of the California Veterans Service Representative Academy. This training and accreditation program gives representatives the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to serve veterans effectively. The Academy helps ensure that veterans across California receive consistent, high-quality support, no matter where they live.

We are also grateful for our continued collaboration across major CalVet programs, including the Mental Health Services Act Grant Program, Homekey+, the California Veterans Health Initiative, and many others. These partnerships help us reach more people, respond to more needs, and innovate together on behalf of those who served.

From all of us at CalVet, thank you for your dedication and teamwork. You help ensure that California's veterans are the most connected, protected, and respected in our nation.

*Lindsey Sin*

Lindsey Sin

Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs

# ABOUT CACVSO

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) is an organization of professional veterans' advocates. In California, as well as other states, County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOS) play a critical role in the veterans' advocacy system and are often the initial contact in the community for veterans' services. Through CVSOS, the CACVSO is committed to California counties to provide a vital and efficient system of services and advocacy to veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Today, 56 of California's 58 counties have CVSOS to advocate not only for veterans and their families, but also for active duty, National Guard, and military reserve members.

## 2026 CACVSO OFFICERS

**President 2024-2026:** David O. West II, Nevada County

**1st Vice President:** Morgan Boyd, San Luis Obispo County

**2nd Vice President:** Jack Murphy, Monterey and San Benito Counties

**Junior Past President:** Rhonda Murphy, Santa Barbara County

**Sergeant at Arms:** Matthew McCoy, Butte County

**1 Year Trustee:** Don Parsons, Colusa County

**2 Year Trustee:** Kyle Pennington, Fresno County

**3 Year Trustee:** Angela Sheble, Amador County

**Treasurer:** Amy Klock, San Diego County

**Secretary:** Yvette Mason, San Luis Obispo County

**Chaplain:** Tammy Bender, Ventura County

**Historian:** Richard "Steve" Johnson, Placer County

**Parliamentarian:** Jose Lopez, Kern County

**Education and Training Chair:** Eric Ensley, Orange County

**Funding Process Committee:** James McHugh, Ventura County

**Legislative Chair:** James Zenner, Los Angeles County

**Executive Director:** Marion Moses

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# RESILIENCE IN ACTION

## How Los Angeles County's Veteran Service Officers Turned Wildfire Crisis Into Care

When wildfires tore through Los Angeles County, LA County Military and Veterans Affairs mobilized immediately. Within hours Bob Hope Patriotic Hall was transformed into a 24/7 emergency shelter for those displaced by the fires.

Within a day, a coordinated response was underway. The County Office of Emergency Management aligned efforts of the Red Cross, CalVet, FEMA, and other local partners. The shelter remained fully staffed around the clock for nearly five days.

Behind the scenes, VSO staff pivoted overnight from office work to crisis response. One employee, who lost their own family home in the fires, still reported for duty the next day. More than 120 veterans and family members found refuge, while donations poured in from across the country.

CalVet Secretary Lindsey Sin committed state reimbursement, while VSOs from other counties deployed to staff Disaster Recovery Centers for months afterward, marking the first successful test of a coordinated, statewide VSO response.

In a state where natural disasters are no longer exceptions, resilience must be built, trained, and ready to deploy.

Veterans Service Officers represent that readiness: a mission-driven force that moves faster than bureaucracy, leads under pressure, and delivers care with empathy shaped by service.



Wildfires devastated Southern California in 2025

The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement



*From left: LA DO Manager Alberto Alpasan, VPAN Squad Leader Steven Choi, LA LINC Anthony Rodriguez, CalVet Secretary Lindsey Sin, LA MVA Director Jim Zenner, LA MVA Veteran Claims Assistant Emmanuel Lopez*

# CVSOs: The Human Center of the Benefits System

There is no greater ally to a military veteran than their County Veteran Service Officer. Not a website. Not a hotline. Not even the systems that ultimately deliver the benefits.

A CVSO is the first person who sits across the table from a veteran and says, "I see you and I hear you. Let's move forward together."

For many veterans, the first time they openly share their military experience is with a CVSO, and that one-on-one trust—built through steady guidance, informed advocacy, and lasting support—is the foundation of the county-based veterans service model and a cornerstone of veteran resilience.

From service-connected compensation to war time pension, from signing up for health care to pursuing awards upgrades, CVSOs ensure veterans and their families receive the benefits the law promises. They translate complex systems into a clear path forward. They gather evidence, develop claims, prepare appeals, and help veterans navigate health care, education, housing, and life after military service.

***But the true measure of their impact extends far beyond paperwork.***

A **good CVSO** helps a veteran move forward.

A **great CVSO** ensures a family can plan for the future.

An **outstanding CVSO** contributes to stronger, more resilient communities.

In California, outstanding is not the exception, it is the standard.

## San Diego's Border-to-Home Model of Veteran Resilience

For the San Diego County Office of Military and Veterans Affairs, resilience is shaped by geography and conscience. With mountains, deserts, and an international border defining its landscape, the county confronts challenges few veteran systems were built to address—especially when former service members are deported, disconnected, and left without access to the benefits they earned.

San Diego's response has been to turn borders into bridges.



Front door of the Deported Veterans Support House in Tijuana, Mexico

Through a locally developed initiative known as Vet Connect, the county established secure computer workstations in public libraries where veterans can safely access VA benefits with county support. The model then expanded across the border. Today, a Vet Connect hub operates in Tijuana, allowing deported veterans to connect directly with San Diego County staff to file claims, restore benefits, and begin the path home. Known as "The Bunker," it may be the only program in the world delivering VA benefits support across an international border.

For deported veterans, access is more than administrative—it is restorative. Many were separated from families, lost income, and went without medical care. Vet Connect offers a dignified reentry into the system they served.

Working with VFW Post 7420 and community partners, San Diego County has helped more than a dozen deported veterans return to the United States over the past four years. When they return, fellow veterans provide housing, food, and support—turning coordination and compassion into homecoming.

Backed by CACVSO collaboration, San Diego's model proves resilience can be quiet, principled, and powerful—and that it leads people home.

“

In the past four years, we've helped more than a dozen deported veterans return home. The moment they step across the border, they're greeted by other veterans—ready with food, housing, and open arms.

---

Ray Flores  
San Diego County Veteran Service Officer



Signage at the Deported Veterans Support House in Tijuana, Mexico



## Support That Meets Veterans Where They Are

Compassionate, individualized detox and residential addiction treatment built around your recovery — your mission, your life.

### Our Mission

At 1 Method Treatment Center, we provide **medically supervised detoxification and residential addiction care** that honors your service and supports your long term recovery.

Every veteran's journey is unique. We create personalized treatment plans that address both the physical challenges of withdrawal and the emotional, psychological, and social needs that impact recovery. Our goal is to help you heal with dignity, respect, and confidence as you take back your life.

### What Sets 1 Method Treatment Center Apart

- Medically supervised detoxification services
- Structured residential addiction treatment
- Individual and group therapy focused on recovery and resilience
- Trauma-informed, veteran-aware care designed for those who served
- A compassionate clinical team experienced in helping people overcome complex addiction

### Veteran-Focused Support

We understand the unique pressures and experiences **veterans face** — from military culture to transition stress, trauma, and reintegration challenges.

Your courage got you this far; we're here to help you take the next step with care that meets you are.

### Working Alongside Veteran Service Officers



[METHODTREATMENT.COM](http://METHODTREATMENT.COM)

# How Counties Benefit When Veterans Thrive

Every dollar a veteran receives in earned benefits flows back into their home community.

Service connected benefits are not taxed—but they are spent on rent, groceries, gas, childcare, and at local businesses. Counties with strong CVSOs see millions of federal dollars enter their local economies, directly tied to investments in veteran support.

But the economic return is only part of a much larger story.

CVSOs reduce strain on local health and social systems by helping veterans access VA health care and federal programs before crises escalate. When homelessness is prevented, treatment courts are navigated successfully, and mental health care is accessed early, counties save resources—and veterans regain stability.

Across California, CVSOs serve rural and urban veterans, tribal communities, women veterans, justice-involved veterans, and those who have fallen through other systems. They act as connectors—linking county agencies, the VA, nonprofits, and community partners into a coordinated network that otherwise would not exist.

CVSOs are not simply benefits specialists.

They are the backbone of California's veteran support ecosystem—helping veterans move beyond survival toward stability, resilience, and lasting well-being.

## Healing, Access, and Community Resilience in Santa Clara County

For the Santa Clara County Office of Veterans Services, veteran resilience begins with a simple but powerful premise: you cannot help people you cannot reach. Under this approach, services are not confined to offices or paperwork—they move into communities,



Veterans receive dental care at the Santa Clara County Veteran Stand Down

parking lots, and shared spaces where trust can form and healing can begin.

That philosophy reshaped veteran care through the county's first reimagined three-day "Stand Down"—a one-stop hub offering on-site claims, medical and dental care, mental health support, and essential services. For many veterans, these initiatives became the first doorway back into care after years, even decades, of disconnection.

This one-stop philosophy defines Santa Clara's Stand Down. Once a traditional event, it was reimagined into a three-day hub open to all veterans and their families, regardless of county. The most recent Stand Down served more than 2,000 attendees with over 100 providers on site—offering haircuts, showers, clothing, groceries, medical and dental care, and even same-day claims processing.

The results are life-changing. One veteran who separated in the 1980s arrived with two dollars in his bank account. After connecting through Stand Down, he gained access to VA disability benefits, stabilized his housing and mental health, and is now helping fund his grandchildren's college savings.

Even amid staffing shortages and budget cuts, demand remains high. By meeting veterans where they are—body, mind, and spirit—the county strengthens not just individuals, but the entire community that stands behind them.

# The Hidden Architecture of Care: The Veteran Support Ecosystem

California's veteran support network is vast—federal, state, county, tribal, nonprofit, philanthropic, academic, and community partners all play essential roles. But the system is not naturally coordinated. It is not intuitive. And it does not operate through a single doorway.

CVSOS are that doorway.

They are the only professionals in the veteran landscape who:

- Understand the full spectrum of federal, state, and county programs
- Carry government accountability and accreditation
- Provide year-round, in-person, confidential assistance
- Are embedded in, and a part of, the communities where veterans actually live
- Have the trust of those who may not seek help anywhere else

In practice, CVSOS serve simultaneously as navigators, case managers, benefit specialists, crisis responders, training officers, outreach coordinators, and community strategists. They align partners, identify gaps, and ensure veterans do not fall through the cracks simply because one system failed to connect with another.

This is why measuring their impact is both essential and inherently difficult.

No spreadsheet can capture a prevented suicide.

No ledger can reflect the moment a veteran feels safe asking for help.

No metric tells the story of what happens when stability is restored.

“

In the political realm, there's power in numbers. Our association's group voice moves legislation and gets our political class to act for veterans. There's strength in numbers.

— Albert Sims  
Director of Veteran Services, Solano County

Yet the outcomes are real and experienced every day across California.

Veterans gain, health, independence and opportunity. Families find support and stability. Communities benefit from stronger local economies and reduced strain on public systems.

And California gains something even more enduring: a more resilient, more connected, and more vibrant veteran population.



The Vista Ridge Supportive Housing in Fairfield, CA provides much needed long-term housing.

This is the ecosystem CVSOs hold together. It is intricate, often unseen, and profoundly human. And without CVSOs, it does not work.

## From Policy to Shelter: Solano County's Model for Ending Veteran Homelessness

In Solano County, veteran homelessness is no longer treated as an unsolvable crisis—it is a problem with a plan. The county's progress shows how coordinated advocacy—such as that provided by the Solano County Veteran Services Office—and structural leadership can turn statewide policy into housing, stability, and dignity for those who served.

That opportunity emerged with California Proposition 1, a statewide measure that modernized behavioral health funding and recognized a fundamental truth: recovery cannot happen without stable housing. Prop 1 expanded mental health and substance-use services while allowing counties to prioritize vulnerable populations, including veterans, for housing tied to treatment.

Within CACVSO, leaders worked to ensure veterans would not be overlooked as counties implemented the new funding. In Solano County, that statewide coordination translated into local action. Veteran leadership joined the county's Behavioral Health Advisory Board, making the case that veterans' benefits are earned through service and that veteran homelessness is both preventable and measurable.

The result was a decisive win: a \$22 million award from the California Department of Housing and Community Development to convert a 100-room hotel into approximately 50 permanent supportive housing units, with 20 to 30 reserved for veterans. For a county with an estimated 60 homeless veterans, the impact is extraordinary—potentially housing up to half the population in need.

More than a housing project, the effort is proof of concept. It demonstrates what becomes possible when Veterans Service Offices are elevated within county leadership and backed by unified statewide advocacy. In Solano County, Proposition 1 became more than policy—it became doors that open, keys that turn, and homes that honor service with action.

# The Human Center of the Benefits System

County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOS) are the local, community-based resource for veterans of all generations who have served the nation, fought its wars and kept its peace. CVSOS are often the first and most frequent point of contact for veterans, family members, and caregivers as they navigate the complex, intergovernmental chain of veterans services and resources.



Education resources for veterans and their family members



Community events and engagement



Health claims assistance



Medal replacement



Job placement and training



Assistance filing claims



Justice involved veterans



Local, state and national advocacy



Accessing VA health care and benefits



VA home loan

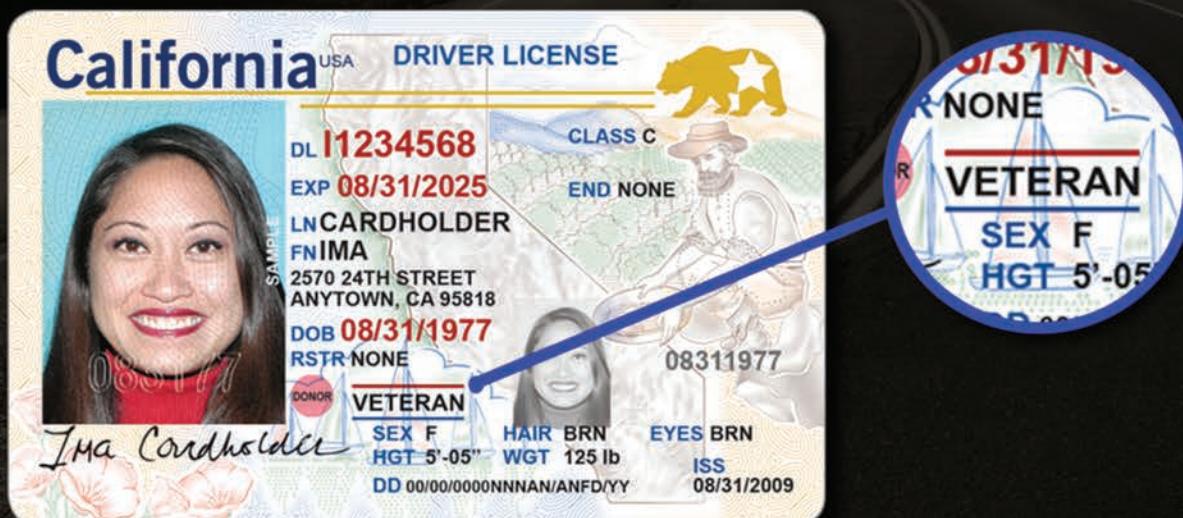
# VETERAN DRIVER'S LICENSE AND ID AVAILABLE

Have you served in the U.S. military? You may qualify to proudly display veteran on your California driver license or identification card. It's 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 DMV application, 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 call **(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)

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# INVESTING WHERE IT WORKS

## Why Adequate Funding for County Veterans Service Offices is Vitally Important

Veteran services look different in every state, shaped by unique populations, geographies, and policy choices. In California, CVSOS represent one of the most effective, locally driven models for connecting veterans and their families to the benefits they have earned.

The results are clear. California's CVSOS consistently deliver strong outcomes, connect veterans to federal benefits at scale, and generate significant economic return for local communities. Yet compared to other states, California invests less per veteran in its county veterans service offices—requiring CVSOS to do more with fewer resources.

### A Shared State-County Responsibility

Unlike states that rely almost exclusively on local funding, California has adopted a shared funding model that recognizes veteran services as a joint state–county responsibility. This framework is established in the California Military and Veterans Code (MVC) and implemented by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet).

State law authorizes reimbursement for a portion of CVSOS compensation and operating costs, provides General Fund local assistance through the annual Budget Act, and recognizes the cost-avoidance value CVSOS create by enrolling veterans in VA health care rather than state-funded systems. Together, these provisions form an accountable, performance-based structure—but one that still falls short of providing an equitable cost share.

### The Funding Gap

Despite strong performance, counties continue to bear a disproportionate share of CVSOS operating costs. CVSOS operations are front funded by counties, with only partial reimbursement through state and federal assistance programs.

Historically, the Legislature has acknowledged a goal of covering 50 percent of CVSOS operating costs at the state level. In practice, that goal has been addressed inconsistently, often years after needs are identified, creating a persistent gap between policy intent and budget reality. Counties have absorbed that gap, even as expectations and demand for services continue to grow.

### The Opportunity Ahead

Veteran well-being is a shared responsibility across all levels of government, but counties face limits in their ability to expand services without additional support. CVSOS are the subject matter experts on veterans in their communities, and they have sustained California's veteran support system through efficiency, dedication and local innovation for far too long.

State funding will allow counties to:

- Invest in the continued growth and retention of the CVSOS workforce
- Hire additional Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs)
- Increase “boots on the ground” in high-density veteran areas
- Reach California veterans that are not yet connected to their benefits
- Secure additional federal dollars for California veterans

## A Proven Investment in Veterans and California

CVSOS are the frontline of California’s veteran support system. They are local, trusted, accountable, and extraordinarily cost-effective. When the state invests in CVSOS, it is not merely funding bureaucracy—it is leveraging local expertise to maximize federal benefits, reduce pressure on public systems, and strengthen communities.

Measured solely in compensation and pension awards, CVSOS already generate a strong return on investment. But their true value extends well beyond those figures.

CVSOS enroll veterans in VA health care, reducing reliance on Medi-Cal. They connect veterans to education and workforce benefits that strengthen California’s labor force. They support housing stability, reduce homelessness, assist survivors and retirees, and serve as trusted navigators for veterans who would otherwise remain disconnected from care and benefits. Each of these actions brings federal dollars into California, avoids state and county expenditures, or both.

Often, the most meaningful outcomes are not captured in standard metrics: a veteran connected to lifetime health care; a surviving spouse able to pursue education; a family restored to stability; a long-overdue recognition that restores dignity and pride. These outcomes are the direct result of CVSOS expertise and advocacy.

The accompanying data confirms what counties already know: jurisdictions that adequately resource their Veteran Service Offices see clear returns—in federal dollars secured, public costs avoided, and veterans served.

Increasing and stabilizing state funding for CVSOS is not simply good veteran policy. It is sound fiscal stewardship—and one of the most reliable investments available to California.

### Key statutory provisions include:

**MVC § 972** – Establishes CVSOS as a county responsibility while authorizing state subvention to re-imburse a portion of CVSOS compensation and operational expenses, conditioned on compliance with CalVet standards.

**MVC § 972.1** – Provides for General Fund local assistance through the annual Budget Act, distributed using a pro rata, performance-based formula, and includes a maintenance-of-effort requirement for counties.

**MVC § 972.2** – Creates the Veterans Service Office Fund, a special fund intended to support CVSOS operations.

**MVC § 972.5** – Authorizes Medi-Cal cost-avoidance reimbursements, recognizing the role CVSOS play in enrolling veterans into VA healthcare and reducing state healthcare costs.

**Title 12, California Code of Regulations (CCR)** – Details eligibility, reporting, and allocation requirements that ensure accountability and performance.

# Monetary Impact of CVSO Activities by County

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25

County	Veteran Population	County Office Staff	Total Federal Department of Veterans Affairs Payments	County Expenditures	Workload Units Produced for Claims/Awards	Claims Filed	Payments (New/Increased Benefits)	ROI: Federal \$ for each County \$
Alameda	40,813	8	\$ 667,447,149	\$ 857,784	1,257	2,031	\$6,045,366	\$778
NO CVSO OFFICE								
Alpine	46	0	\$ 1,298,698					
Amador	2,693	1	\$ 44,277,496	\$ 159,927	724	774	\$1,744,101	\$276
Butte	12,151	5	\$ 189,656,411	\$ 424,416	3,758	3,385	\$9,843,514	\$446
Calaveras	3,192	3	\$ 57,666,836	\$ 244,595	819	639	\$2,243,513	\$235
Colusa	698	1	\$ 10,473,473	\$ 83,381	106	64	\$484,881	\$125
Contra Costa	37,240	14	\$ 592,517,994	\$ 2,377,244	8,134	4,210	\$28,205,636	\$249
Del Norte	1,669	2	\$ 26,847,375	\$ 201,860	192	183	\$687,959	\$133
El Dorado	10,772	8	\$ 164,023,250	\$ 708,840	3,298	4,520	\$11,467,537	\$231
Fresno	32,969	10	\$ 733,292,867	\$ 123,432	5,185	6,672	\$9,334,560	\$5,940
Glenn	1,034	4	\$ 16,234,371	\$ 160,807	262	138	\$1,171,340	\$100
Humboldt	6,908	3	\$ 136,906,379	\$ 388,252	1,820	2,005	\$4,785,778	\$352
Imperial	4,726	4	\$ 91,494,589	\$ 192,611	1,544	1,483	\$6,932,614	\$475
Inyo	1,451	1	\$ 13,108,104	\$ 118,200	132	192	\$610,033	\$110
Kern	32,964	12	\$ 501,515,222	\$ 810,449	6,462	10,066	\$16,091,648	\$618
Kings	8,627	6	\$ 154,338,560	\$ 472,943	1,672	2,912	\$9,128,722	\$326
Lake	3,760	3	\$ 110,291,032	\$ 189,736	2,463	2,323	\$7,737,904	\$581
Lassen	1,910	2	\$ 33,988,862	\$ 176,000	243	168	\$961,648	\$193
Los Angeles	222,934	55	\$ 4,184,994,325	\$ 12,436,000	18,954	36,036	\$15,908,634	\$336
Madera	5,752	3	\$ 131,392,744	\$ 443,642	1,692	1,663	\$4,492,420	\$296
Marin	8,238	3	\$ 119,202,765	\$ 303,659	1,194	976	\$5,293,847	\$392
Mariposa	1,463	1	\$ 22,091,348	\$ 24,270	48	35	\$273,102	\$910
Mendocino	4,025	5	\$ 94,183,624	\$ 388,229	1,417	927	\$3,587,966	\$242
Merced	8,394	3	\$ 157,480,377	\$ 383,845	1,783	1,592	\$7,426,283	\$410
Modoc	689	1	\$ 10,799,459	\$ 69,861	40	38	\$62,897	\$154
Monterey	16,865	9	\$ 300,970,691	\$ 1,139,516	4,143	5,175	\$18,067,436	\$264
Napa	5,262	3	\$ 89,639,627	\$ 843,142	3,246	3,283	\$9,467,470	\$106
Nevada	6,191	4	\$ 95,505,050	\$ 463,457	2,618	3,236	\$5,391,196	\$206
Orange	83,450	10	\$ 1,212,142,186	\$ 1,461,168	8,376	12,671	\$29,040,023	\$829
Placer	22,480	8	\$ 363,544,158	\$ 1,019,413	8,182	6,965	\$25,373,056	\$356
Plumas	1,291	2	\$ 25,137,794	\$ 95,000	409	449	\$2,431,330	\$264
Riverside	109,686	37	\$ 2,381,421,522	\$ 2,921,815	11,180	19,953	\$15,551,116	\$815
Sacramento	71,268	13	\$ 1,215,842,953	\$ 1,328,437	7,661	9,001	\$25,767,046	\$915
San Benito	2,067	1.5	\$ 48,552,976	\$ 130,425	821	1,116	\$3,457,420	\$372
San Bernardino	83,497	30	\$ 1,572,505,787	\$ 2,784,670	23,612	65,405	\$88,941,255	\$564
San Diego	225,278	40	\$ 4,508,660,858	\$ 4,806,283	16,266	28,208	\$58,733,664	\$938
San Francisco	18,454	6.5	\$ 494,734,284	\$ 1,809,007	2,952	6,572	\$9,371,745	\$273
San Joaquin	26,592	12	\$ 451,745,653	\$ 1,207,407	5,611	6,680	\$17,626,510	\$374
San Luis Obispo	13,927	9	\$ 170,907,927	\$ 697,439	2,452	9,163	\$14,022,150	\$245
San Mateo	18,492	5	\$ 423,721,557	\$ 1,222,439	3,202	3,619	\$14,265,192	\$346
Santa Barbara	17,074	5	\$ 236,525,509	\$ 476,894	4,075	4,874	\$20,183,604	\$495
Santa Clara	42,491	24	\$ 851,190,817	\$ 3,696,124	6,618	8,073	\$27,548,484	\$230
Santa Cruz	7,815	5	\$ 156,495,991	\$ 766,182	1,843	1,785	\$9,653,530	\$204
Shasta	12,107	8	\$ 253,403,404	\$ 807,983	4,845	6,608	\$14,837,935	\$313
Sierra	192	0	\$ 2,623,628					
NO CVSO OFFICE								
Siskiyou	2,889	2	\$ 44,950,149	\$ 110,089	839	520	\$3,079,620	\$408
Solano	29,915	8	\$ 603,757,834	\$ 1,140,828	2,517	2,875	\$3,021,254	\$529
Sonoma	19,516	6	\$ 328,431,024	\$ 100,000	3,120	2,373	\$14,141,314	\$3,284
Stanislaus	17,953	9	\$ 293,292,725	\$ 1,421,158	7,120	6,897	\$22,348,920	\$206
Tehama	3,366	3	\$ 63,290,060	\$ 190,583	2,225	1,656	\$5,063,866	\$332
Trinity	985	1	\$ 15,193,920	\$ 233,203	777	512	\$2,334,315	\$65
Tulare	13,603	5	\$ 245,060,787	\$ 269,673	4,474	3,687	\$11,944,753	\$908
Tuolumne	3,915	4	\$ 58,811,877	\$ 240,147	1,482	1,516	\$4,886,341	\$244
Ventura	32,417	13	\$ 498,566,284	\$ 2,182,710	6,250	6,471	\$30,755,619	\$228
Yolo	6,909	3	\$ 108,440,064	\$ 392,332	1,226	1,298	\$6,557,823	\$276
Yuba & Sutter	10,297	5	\$ 112,001,646	\$ 500,000	4,669	2,379	\$18,782,838	\$387
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,381,362</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>\$25,574,553,237</b>	<b>\$ 56,197,507</b>	<b>216,010</b>	<b>316,052</b>	<b>\$687,168,728</b>	<b>\$ 29,884</b>

# PROTECTING VETERANS FROM UNACCREDITED AND PREDATORY CLAIMS COMPANIES

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## Message from CACVSO Legislative Chair, Jim Zenner

As California enters the second year of its legislative cycle, the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) remains steadfast in its mission to protect veterans and their families from exploitation and to advance policies that strengthen long-term stability. While opposition groups may have greater resources for advertising and lobbying, their goal is profit—not the comprehensive, no-cost, accredited services CVSOS provide. CACVSO is confident in the importance of this work and committed to ensuring veterans are protected.

Over the past year, our legislative committee called on the full membership to engage directly with state leaders, and CVSOS across California responded—traveling to Sacramento and participating in coordinated advocacy. This collective effort reflects CACVSO's strengthened approach to advocacy, with every county playing an active role. I extend my sincere thanks to our legislative committee members, GSI, Martinez Consulting, Reeb, CSCVC, and the leadership of both legislative committees for their collaboration as we advance our 2026 priorities.

### **Senate Bill 694 – Penalties for Unaccredited Claims Assistance**

At CACVSO's Winter Training Conference, members voiced strong support for legislation imposing criminal penalties on individuals who violate federal law by assisting with VA claims without proper accreditation. Since early 2025, CACVSO has worked closely with the chairs of the Senate and Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committees to advance Senate Bill 694. While challenges remain, our resolve is unwavering. Predatory claims practices undermine trust, delay benefits, and harm veterans, and CACVSO will continue advocating until these practices are eliminated.

### **Assembly Bill 53 – Military Retirement Tax Relief**

CACVSO is proud to co-sponsor Assembly Bill 53, which seeks to exempt military retirement pay from California income tax. Affordability remains a pressing concern for veterans and their families, particularly retirees living on fixed incomes. While CACVSO commends the Governor's proposal to exempt up to \$20,000 for qualifying retirees, we will continue advocating for broader and more durable relief that allows military retirees to remain in California after service.

### **Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption**

Affordability challenges also extend to homeownership. California continues to lag behind other states in providing meaningful property tax relief for disabled veterans, despite the state's high cost of living. In the coming year, CACVSO will intensify efforts to educate legislators on the need for competitive exemptions that make homeownership more attainable for disabled veterans and their families.

### **Expanding CalVet CVSOS Mental Health Grant and LINC Programs**

CACVSO continues to advocate for expansion of the CalVet CVSOS Mental Health Grant Program, including greater use of Behavioral Health Services Act funding to improve efficiency and coordination. State-funded initiatives administered through CVSOS integrate benefits expertise with behavioral health services, improving access while reducing duplication.

The CalVet Local Interagency Network Coordinator (LINC) program also plays a critical role in disaster response, community education, and care coordination. With only eight coordinators statewide, demand far exceeds capacity. CACVSO will continue championing expansion of the LINC program to strengthen California's veteran support system.

### **Wins Through Increments: How Unified Advocacy Becomes Real-World Impact**

Meaningful reform in California often arrives through incremental progress. Through unified advocacy, CACVSO helped secure a historic one-year exemption on military retirement pay—California's first step toward broader reform. While modest, this win demonstrates that persistence matters and momentum is real. CACVSO is now building on this progress, pressing for multi-year and ultimately comprehensive relief so veterans can afford to stay, contribute, and retire with dignity.

## **MOTOMU NAKASAKO LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD 2025**

CACVSO has selected Pilar Schiavo to receive the Motomu Nakasako Legislator of the Year Award for 2025. The Motomu Nakasako Award is named after "Mote" Nakasako, a Los Angeles County Veteran 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.

Assemblywoman Schiavo has shown exemplary commitment and unwavering dedication to the veteran community. Her tireless efforts to protect veterans and their family members have not gone unnoticed by our membership and the veteran community in California. She has been a true advocate, working diligently to ensure that veterans receive the support, resources, and recognition they deserve.



Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo was elected to the California State Assembly in November of 2022 and re-elected in 2024 to represent the 40th Assembly District, representing the Northwest San Fernando Valley, Val Verde, Castaic, and the Santa Clarita Valley. Upon her election, she was appointed as Assistant Majority Whip by the Speaker of the Assembly and now serves as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs. During her first term, she brought back a record \$94 million in district investment in school and community safety, seniors' meal programs, veteran housing, domestic violence services, and creating local jobs. Prior to her election, Assemblywoman Schiavo was a Nurse Advocate and Small Business Owner who worked in the labor movement for more than 20 years. Throughout her career, Assemblywoman Schiavo helped deliver healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, to more than one million people. In the North-west San Fernando Valley, she co-founded an organization that helped secure housing for Veterans experiencing homelessness, has delivered more than 50,000 meals to people in need, and increased resources to help keep our communities safe. Assemblywoman Schiavo lives in Chatsworth with her creative kid, where they love to hike in the Santa Susana Mountains.



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*This year you helped make a powerful difference:*

- California CVSOs completed 334,699 claim-related activities.
- 462,095 interactions were recorded with or on behalf of veterans and their families.
- A total of \$781,628,841 in monetary VA benefits was secured, including:
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  - \$6,205,859 in assistance provided to homeless veterans
- 27,229 DVS-40 applications were processed, resulting in approximately \$240 million in waived tuition for veteran dependents.

**Your dedication, compassion, and support continue to change lives.**

Every day you stand beside those who served our country, ensuring they receive the benefits, care and guidance they deserve.

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for all that you do.**

**-Your VetPro Team**