

Illinois Association
of
County Veterans Assistance Commissions

Andrew C. Tangen, President



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024

www.veteransbenefitsillinois.org

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Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions

January 21, 2025

Dear Stakeholder,

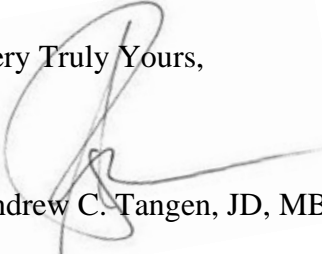
It is with great pleasure that I present you with the annual report of the Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions (Association). As the Association charged with supporting County Veterans Assistance Commissions (VAC) across the State of Illinois, we provided the following services in Fiscal Year 2024:

- 1.) Continuing Education Training
- 2.) Veteran Advocacy
- 3.) Legislative Advocacy

In our fifth edition of this report, 36 of the 49 VAC's listed at the end of this report contributed their data in full or partial part. In Fiscal Year 2024 ending on November 30th, those VAC's were instrumental in securing \$132,909,005.57 in new benefits for Illinois veterans, their dependents, and their survivors from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). That amount does not take into account money that we helped our veterans save by helping them access VA health care, home loan, education, or other benefits. Consequently, VAC's continue to be a significant, judicious, and economically stimulating government entity at the county level.

Thank you for your support of our State's veterans. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Very Truly Yours,



Andrew C. Tangen, JD, MBA, MS
President

Our Mission

The Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions is organized and operated for the educational purposes of the Association's Veteran membership, which, in part, consists of Veteran Service Officers throughout the State of Illinois. This mission conforms to the terms established in the 501 (c)(3) section of the Internal Revenue Code. To serve as the central counseling and coordinating office for all County Veterans Assistance Commission offices included as members of the Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions to be referred to as the Association. To foster and perpetuate VAC's in all counties where viable commissions do not exist and provide such information and training as deemed necessary. To have general oversight of the rules, laws, and regulations pertinent to governing and administering the County VAC's within the State of Illinois for the benefit of Military Veterans and their dependents. To establish communication and recognition with all local, state, and federal service officers for processing Veterans and their dependents' claims as may be referred to VAC offices across the State. To promote the welfare of all Military Veterans and their dependents.

Association's Officers

				
Andrew C. Tangen President, Lake County	Jacob A. Zimmerman Vice- President, Kane County	Lissa M. Olson Secretary, LaSalle County	Kenneth T. Buck Treasurer, Grundy County	William Sutton Judge Advocate, DeKalb County

					
Jesus Pereira Sergeant-at- Arms, Winnebago County	Erik W. Papineau Chaplain, Will County	John L. Murray 1st Division Vice- President, Lake County	Luz Gilkey 2nd Division Vice- President, Ogle County	Dan Benedict 3rd Division Vice- President, Logan County	Gregory C. Collins 4th Division Vice- President Macon County

Section I: Association's Operational Impact

Below you will find our Association's cumulative impact on veterans' benefits throughout the State of Illinois. As a disclaimer, these statistics are not a perfect apples-to-apples, year-over-year comparison. This report is compiled on a volunteer basis and not all VAC's contribute their data. This year, we had some new VAC's contribute their data and we had some VAC's that contributed their data last year, but not contribute it this year. This year, we had 36 VAC's contribute to this report, three more than last year. Therefore, these figures should be read as "at least" in their totality as obviously the non-contributing VAC's did provide assistance that is not reported here. We look forward to more complete data in future years. With that disclaimer, these statistics are impressive and show that VAC's have an incredible impact and remain an essential unit of local government.

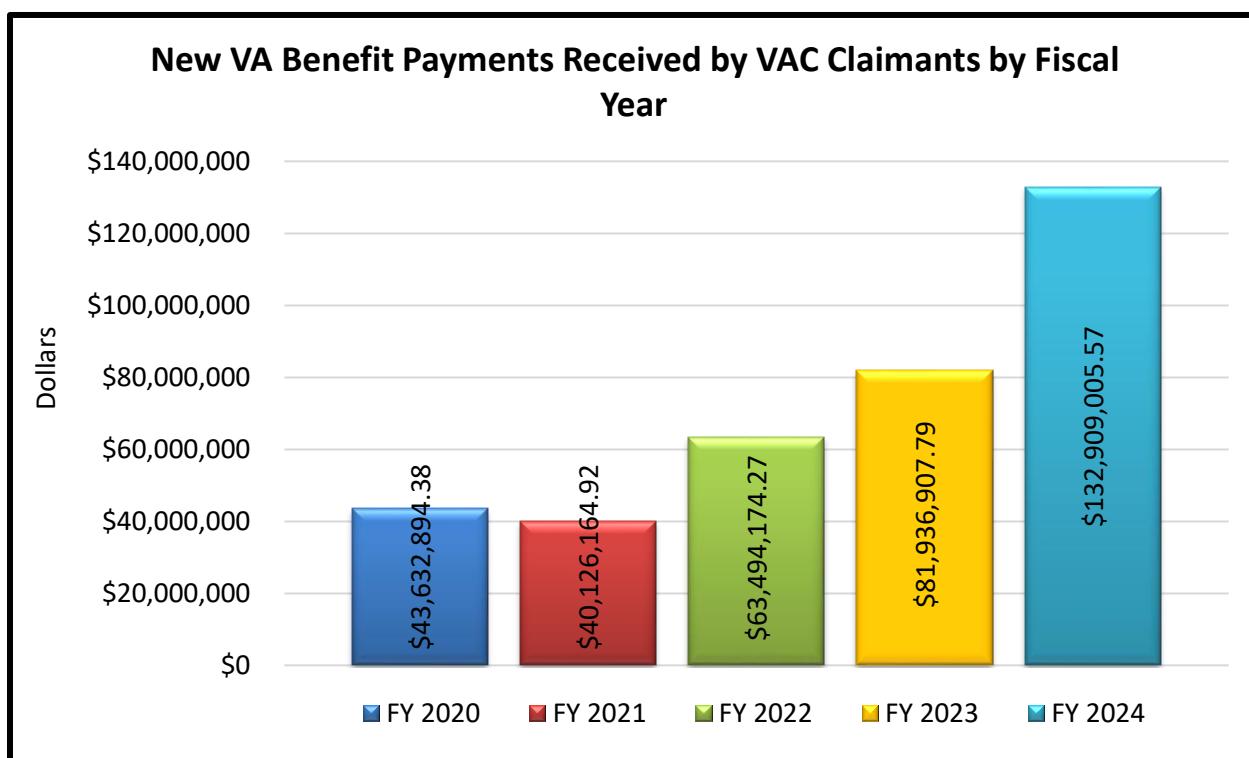


Figure 1. This chart shows the total amount of federal VA service-connected disability or non-service connected pension benefits received by VAC clients by fiscal year. The large jump this year can largely be attributed to increased benefits available from the PACT Act and the realization of the claims assistance mandate on VAC's from recent amendments to the Illinois Military Veterans Assistance Act (MVAA).

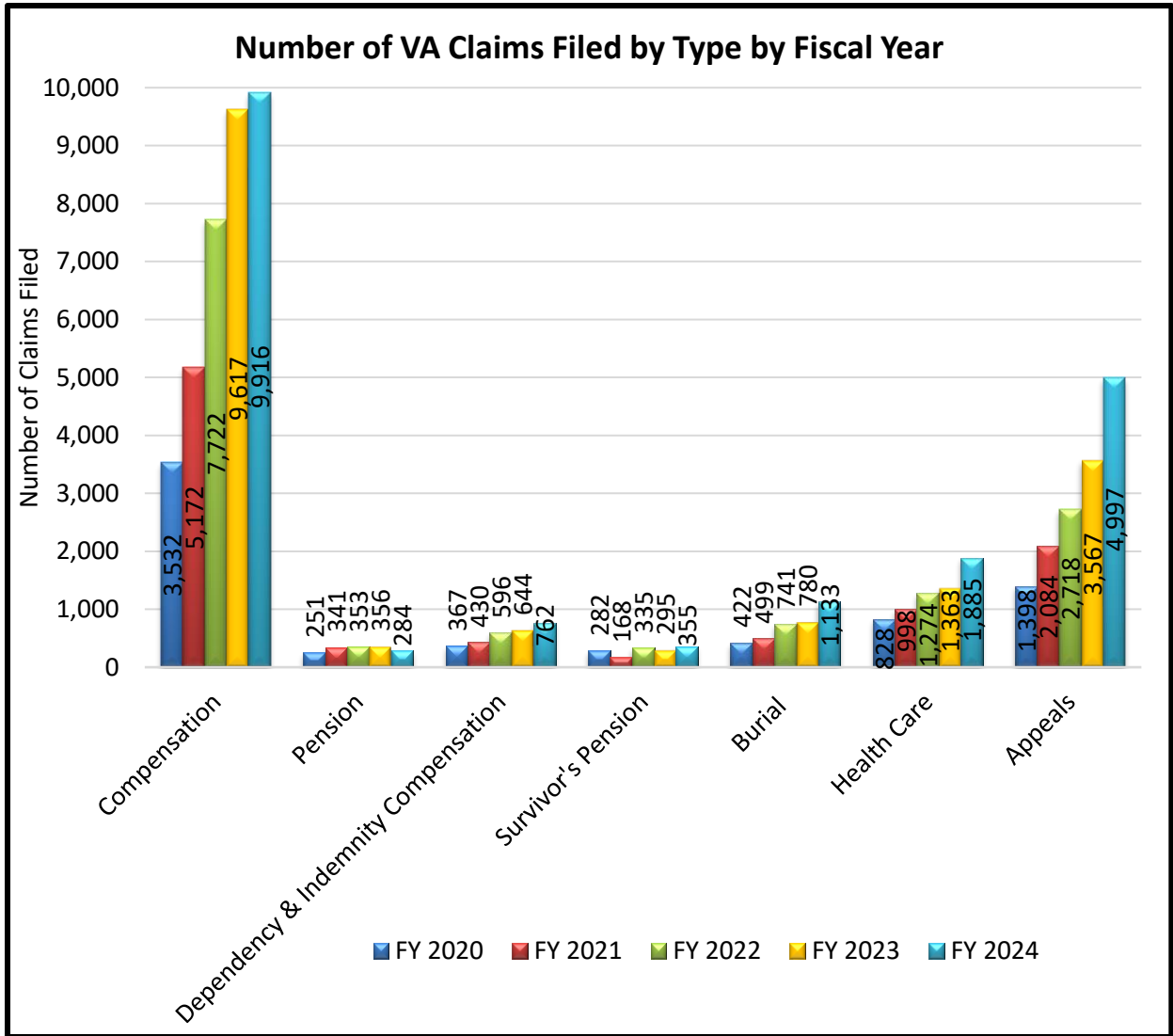


Figure 2. Fiscal Year 2024 was very fruitful in the form of work performed. VAC's across Illinois generated more work across most claim categories.

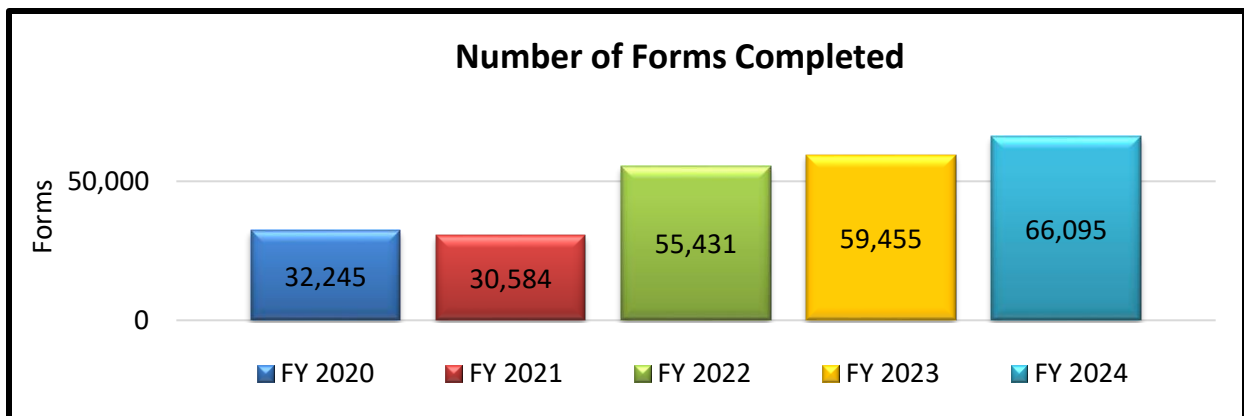


Figure 3. Number of forms produced by Fiscal Year. The moderate increase over previous years can be attributed to the PACT Act and claims mandates brought by amendments to the MVA.

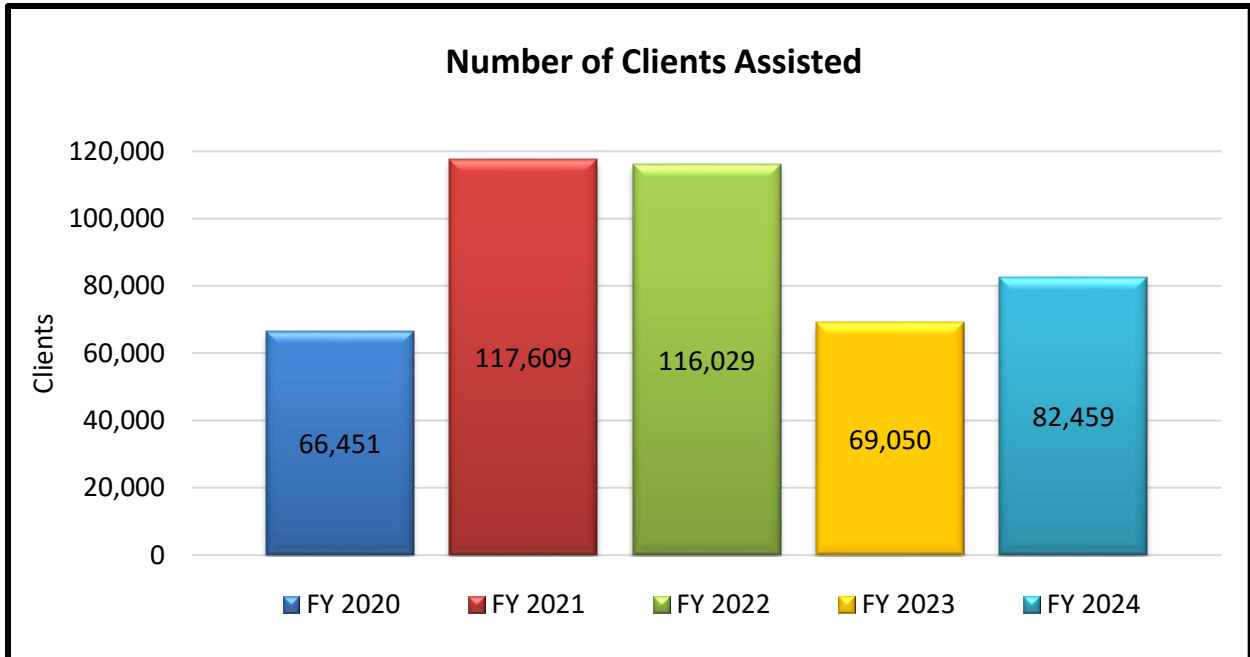


Figure 4. The number of clients assisted by VAC's across Illinois has increased since the previous year. This figure has fluctuated over the last five years which we attribute largely due to standardized data reporting and data integrity issues. The more recent the number, the more accurate the data as most VAC's are adopting a similar definition on "clients assisted."

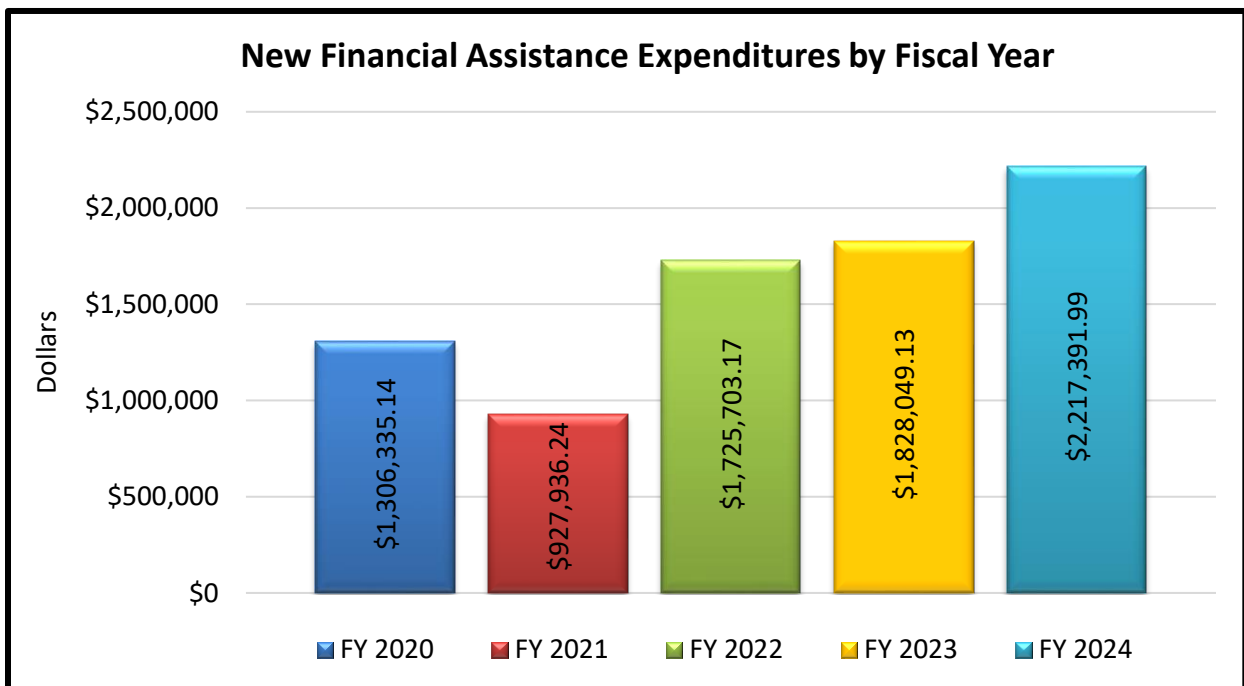


Figure 5. A critical service provided by VAC's is providing financial assistance to indigent veterans and their families. There is a marginal increase in financial assistance payments over the previous fiscal year.

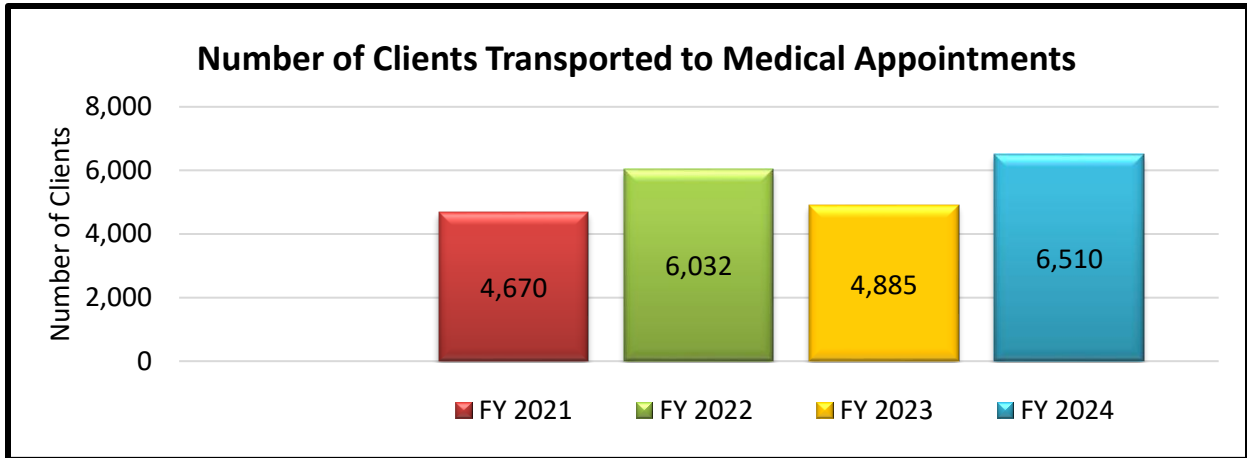


Figure 6. *Another crucial service that some VAC's provide, is transportation to and from medical appointments – mostly at VA medical facilities. It is often utilized by veterans who have medical conditions that prohibit their ability to drive or drive long distance. This is not a statistic we compiled in Fiscal Year 2020, which is why that data is missing.*

Section II: Association's Educational Impact

Our training team consists of several senior and experienced VSO's. Karen Smietanski of Kankakee County, one of our education co-chairs hit her 15-year milestone of working at the VAC. Lissa Olson of LaSalle County, the other co-chair, has been working for just over five years at the VAC. Jillian Padaoan and Shane McNerney, both of Lake County, have been on the education team for three years now, both working at the VAC for just under five years. Our newest team member is Amy Benson from Will County who comes to us with about seven years of service at the VAC. Both Karen and Amy also are trainers for the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers showing the depth of their expertise.

The Association's Education team had another great year. Last year, after beginning our pre-basic benefits course to our virtual education programs, we saw 23 new VSO's take our pre-basic benefits course. We also continued our virtual Lunch-and-Learn sessions. This year we had a total of 69 participants.

At our winter meeting held on January 11th, we brought in presenters from the U.S. Census Bureau, Illinois Secretary of State, Illinois Attorney General's office, and The Community Foundation. We had 52 participants in attendance. Unfortunately, a winter storm hit the conference and subsequently attendance was a little low and cut short, but the training was phenomenal.

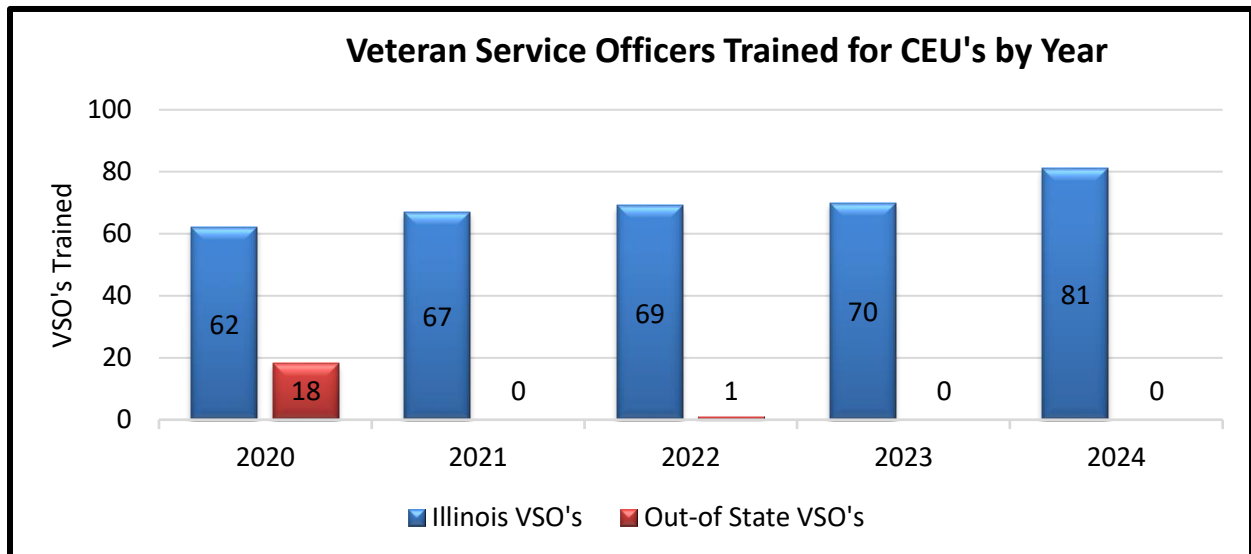


Figure 1. Number of Veteran Service Officers trained by the Association by year. In FY 2024, the Association was responsible for training 69 VSO's from 30 different VAC's, 10 VSO's from the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, and two VSO's from Hanover Township.



Former Board of Veterans Appeals Chairman, Cheryl Mason, provides training at the Fall Conference.

Our fall training conference had 81 VSO's attending. Our presenters included former Board of Veterans Appeals Chairman Cheryl Mason, Chicago VA Regional Office Veterans Service Center Manager John Pennington, Theresa Raymond, Board of Veterans Appeals Veterans Law Judge Theresa Raymond, Veterans Law Attorney Katrina Eagle and her associate Jim Radogna, as well as representatives from the Illinois Attorney General's Office and Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. Our national association and the VA require a minimum of 16 hours of continuing education units (CEU) per year to maintain a VSO's VA Accreditation. Our goal over the past several years is to meet and exceed that standard at our school and with additional educational opportunities throughout the year. This year our conference provided 25 hours of CEU's for the VSO's in attendance.

Section III: Association's Legislative Impact

The Association's President and First Division Vice-President (who is also the Legislative Committee Chairman) traveled to Washington D.C. in February to discuss over a dozen bills with members of Congress. They specifically highlighted the GUARD Act (S.3619), PLUS for Veterans Act (S.1789), and the CVSO Act (H.R. 984; S. 106) to garner federal funds to support the efforts of the County Veteran Service Offices at the County, State, and Tribal Levels.



Association President Andrew Tangen testifies before the U.S. House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs beside his colleagues from other Veteran Service Organizations on April 10, 2024.

On December 17th, The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act was passed in both chambers of Congress and it was moved to the President's desk for signature on December 23rd, 2024. The CVSO Act was included in this omnibus bill and will be the first piece of legislation that will authorize the VA to provide grants to states or tribes to implement programs that improve outreach and assistance to veterans and their families, assist in the development and submittal of claims, or increase the number of county or tribal veterans service officers in states. Annual travel to Washington, DC has been extremely beneficial and will be an ongoing endeavor in 2025.

The Association's Legislative Committee formed healthier relationships and networks with

partners and firmly collaborated with federal, state, and local representatives, organizations, and state organizations to ensure the benefits of Illinois veterans and their families were not negatively impacted or altered in any way.

Sharing the current list of the 118th U.S. Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committee Members, the 103rd Illinois General Assembly, and the Illinois Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committee Members for awareness and to facilitate all Veterans Service Officers to collaborate with their elected officials is paramount to the ongoing success of enhancing and protecting Illinois veterans' benefits.

This has been a very productive year as six very important bills were signed into law by Governor J. B. Pritzker: HB 612 is now Public Act 103-0596, SB 3479 is now Public Act 103-0596, HB 5649 is now Public Act 103-0746, SB 2751 is now Public Act 103-0621, HB 4934 is now Public Act 103-0841, and SB 2751 is now Public Act 103-0621. The aforementioned laws enhanced and solidified benefits for veterans, their families, and their survivors.

Collectively there were several call outs for the Association's membership and partners to submit witness slips in support of or in opposition to several bills resulting in over 1400 witness slips filed in 2024 on original bills and amended bills. This is a massive increase from previous years and a clear depiction of the unification of the Illinois Veteran Service Organizations solidarity regarding taking care of veterans and their families in Illinois.

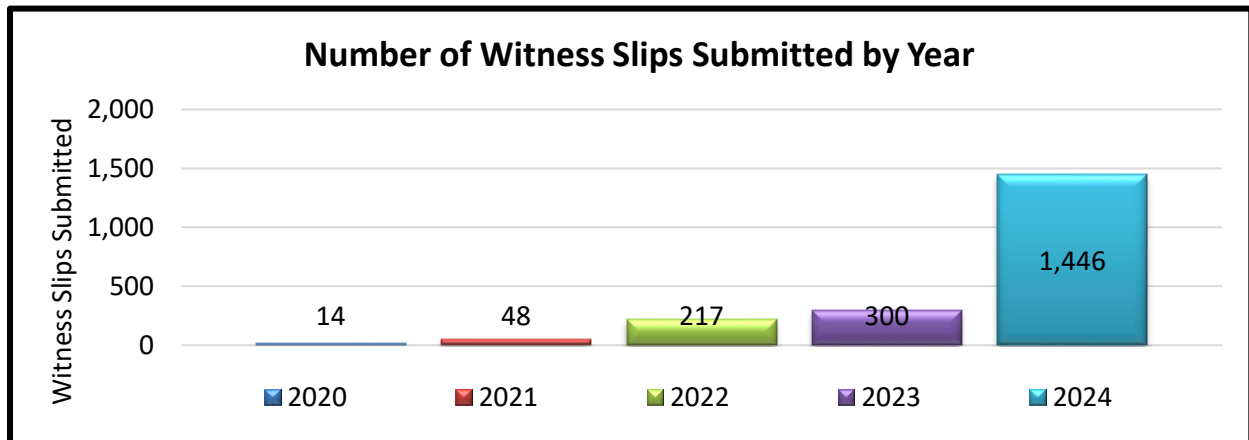


Figure 1. This chart shows the number of Witness Slips submitted by Association members to the Illinois General Assembly in support of or in opposition to State Legislation for which the Association has an interest.

The results of close partnerships and collaboration were recognized and awarded to a few outstanding Illinois elected officials. The Association recognized State Representative Stephanie Kifowit (D, 84), and State Senator Mike Porfirio (D, 11) for their consistent and tireless support of veterans and their families.

The Legislative Committee will continue to closely partner with and monitor proposed legislation and staunchly advocate for veterans and their families.

Section IV: Association's Advocacy Impact

Throughout Fiscal Year 2024, the Association continued to increase its advocacy for Illinois veterans at both the state and federal level. This involved meeting with state and federal legislators on legislative priorities discussed in Section III, passing resolutions, meeting with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, working with Congress to pass important and critical legislation, conducting briefings with VA employees, working with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, and providing subject matter testimony to both the US Congress, Illinois House, and Illinois Senate Committees on pending legislation.

Federal Legislators

The Association continued its close working relationships with Congressional partners throughout Fiscal Year 2024, assisting them with outreach events, legislative input, and meeting with them in both Illinois and in Washington D.C. Specifically, in February members of the Association traveled to Washington D.C. to attend the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers Legislative and Leadership Summit in which the Association took the opportunity to meet with several members of Congress to discuss the *Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act* (H.R. 984; S. 106). With partnerships on the national level with National Association of Counties and other trade organizations, this important piece of legislation was included in S.141 – *The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*, which was signed into law by the President on January 2, 2025.

Association members further continued these open lines of communication with Congressional Representatives and staffers throughout the State of Illinois and nationally to discuss concerns and issues facing the veteran community. The Association President traveled to Washington D.C. in April to provide subject matter testimony to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. The testimony centered around multiple pieces of pending legislation written to: expand upon much needed improvements to medical disability examinations veterans are required to attend in the application of benefits; toxic exposures and the VA implementation of regulations, policies, and procedures on adjudicating and providing benefits to veterans; compensation and pension claim quality improvements and efficiencies to ensure benefit delivery is not delayed; cost of living adjustments

for veterans and their survivors; better delivery of benefits to survivors; and, expanding options to veterans on the review of denials regarding claims for benefits and healthcare.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

In February, the Association President was invited to participate with the Board of Veterans Appeals, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and other shareholders in a roundtable summit over the course of three days on AMA. Though the new appeals system is exponentially better than the legacy system for agency review of denied or incorrectly decided claims, there are issues that persist. This summit provided the beginning work necessary to work towards providing Congress with solutions on how to continue to improve AMA and to discuss other issues that are continuing to cause a backlog of appeals at the Board of Veterans Appeals.



Association President Andrew Tangen, First Division Vice-President John Murray, and VSO Nathaniel Johnson meet with VA Secretary Denis McDonough in Washington D.C. after discussing the implementation of the PACT Act and other VA initiatives and how CVSO's, like those employed at VAC's, provide valuable insight.



Association President Andrew Tangen listens to presentations by Board of Veterans Appeals Judges on issues and concerns regarding the implementation and execution of the Appeals Modernization Act II Summit in Washington D.C. in February of 2024. The summit was the first of its kind in bringing together multiple different stakeholders from various entities and Congressional Staffers to begin the work on addressing the issues and presenting suggestions on new legislation to better serve our veterans.

State Legislators

The Association worked throughout the year with state legislators on pending legislation to ensure effective statutory language, including legislation being passed into law to combat Claims Sharks in Illinois, SB 3479, Public Act 103-0783, which amended the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act to ensure veterans are protected from the deceptive campaigns Claim Sharks engage. The Commission further worked with the General Assembly on HB 612 (Public Act 103-0596), HB 5649 (Public Act 103-0746), SB 2751 (Public Act 103-0621), HB 4934 (Public Act 103-0841), and SB 2751 (Public Act 103-0621), each enhancing and solidifying benefits for veterans, their families and their survivors.

NACVSO Leadership

The Association continued to advance the interest of Illinois veterans on the national level by advocating for members of our Association to be elected to the Executive Board of the NACVSO. Association President Andrew Tangen (Lake County) was re-elected First Vice-President, Association member Nathaniel Johnson (Kane County) was re-elected Second Vice-President, Association First Division Vice President John Murray (Lake County) continues to serve as Judge Advocate, Association member Jesus Pereira (Winnebago County) serves as Sergeant-at-Arms, and Association member Karen Smietanski (Kankakee County) was given the position of lead trainer. The Association looks forward to the years ahead where these members will continue to advance in leadership positions and for an increase of our Association's participation in NACVSO.

Section V: General Illinois Veteran Statistics

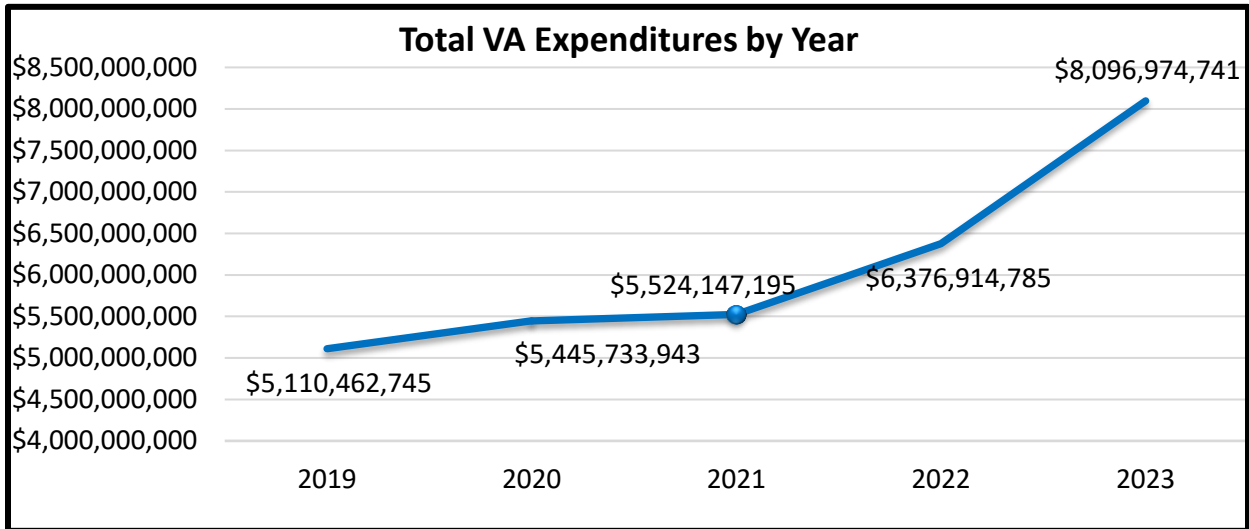


Figure 1. Total VA Expenditures in Illinois by Federal Fiscal Year. *FY 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [1]

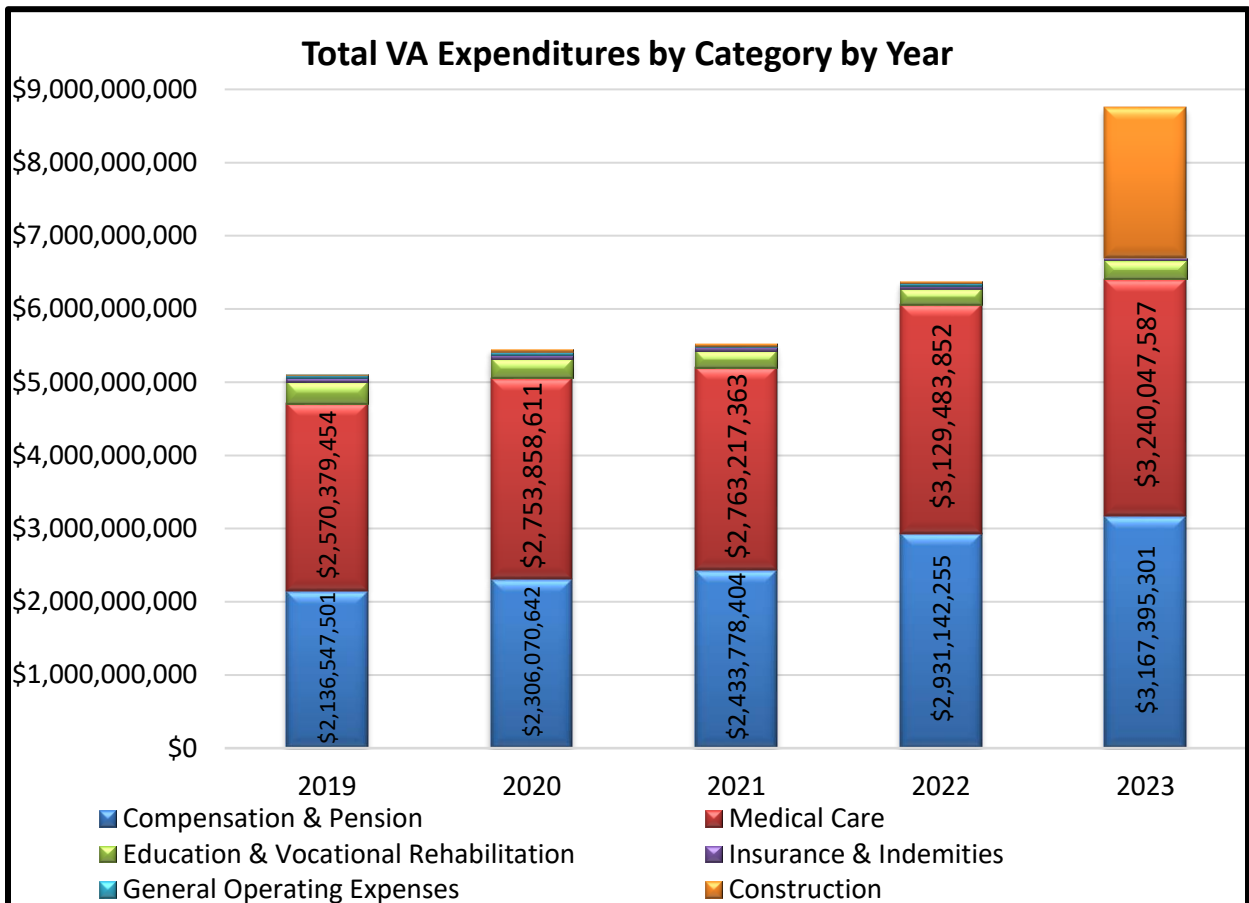


Figure 2. VA Expenditures in Illinois by benefit category by Federal Fiscal Year. *FY 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [1]

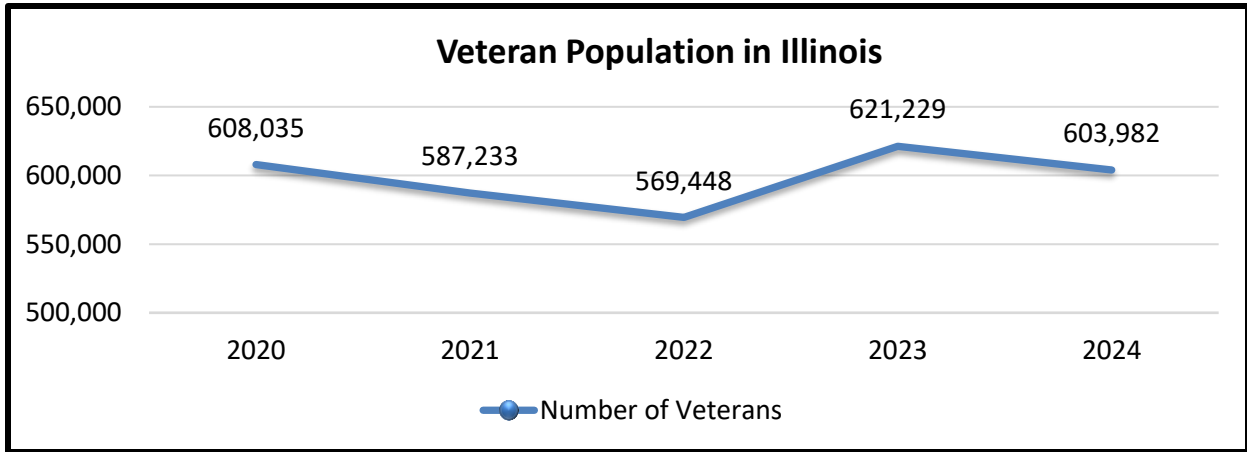


Figure 3. The veteran population in the U.S. is projected to decline 38% by 2053. [2]

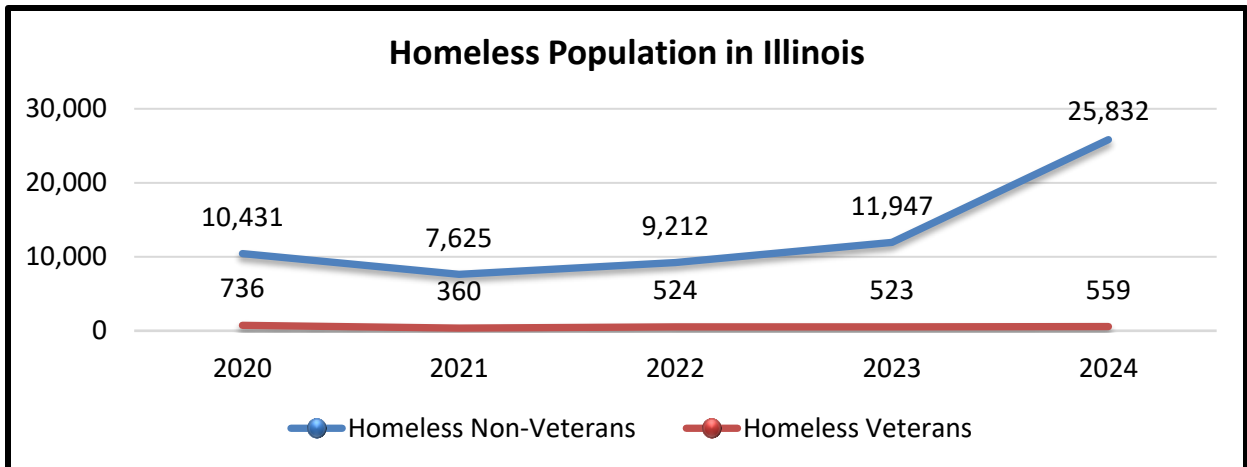


Figure 4. The Association’s membership participates in interagency Homeless Veteran Task Forces and Continuums of Care, which actively engage the homeless veteran population to reduce its number and achieve “Functional Zero.” The data for 2021 was skewed as the Point-in-Time Count allowed cancelling the counting of unsheltered homeless individuals due to COVID-19 transmission concerns. [3]

<u>2024 Population Statistics</u>	<u>Illinois</u>	<u>United States</u>
Veteran Population Rate (2023) [2] [8]:	4.8%	5.4%
Veterans Over Age 65 [2]:	40%	45.6%
Female Veteran Rate [2]:	10%	11.3%
Veteran Median Income (2023) [8]:	\$52,170	\$52,122
Civilian Median Income (2023) [8]:	\$42,190	\$40,368

Figure 5. Income and population statistics for 2024 unless otherwise noted.

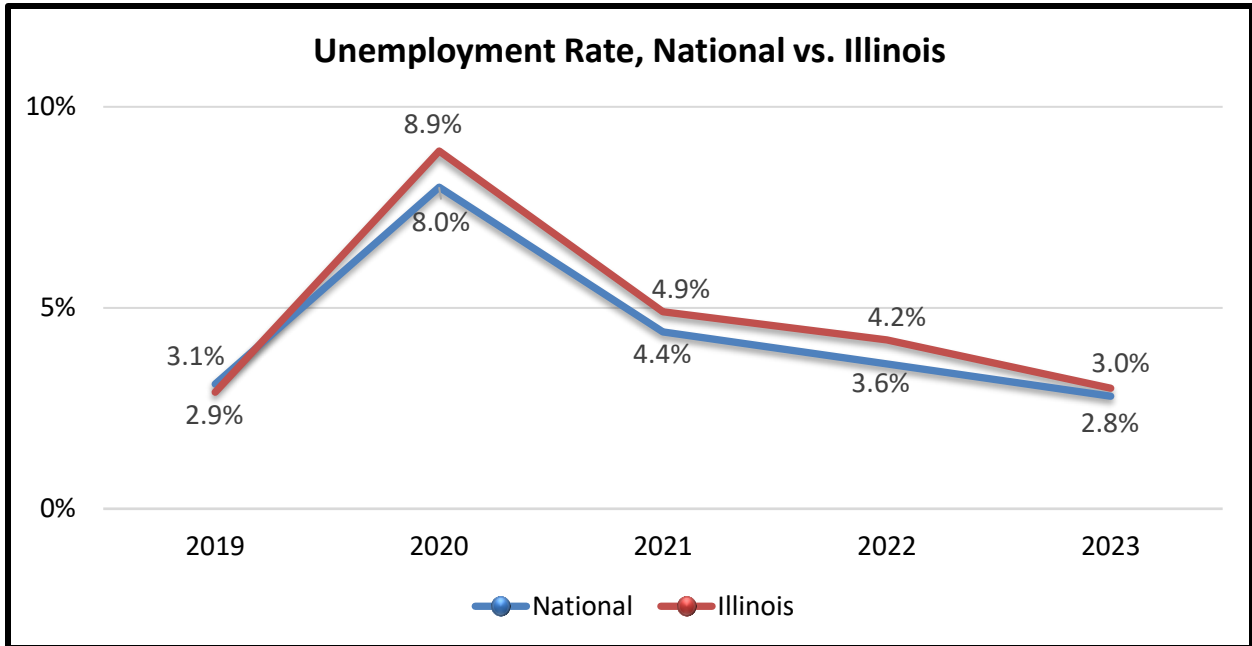


Figure 6. This chart contrasts the unemployment rate statewide and nationally. Illinois has lagged behind the nation as a whole since the COVID-19 Pandemic began. *Fiscal Year 2024 data is not yet available from the BLS. [4]

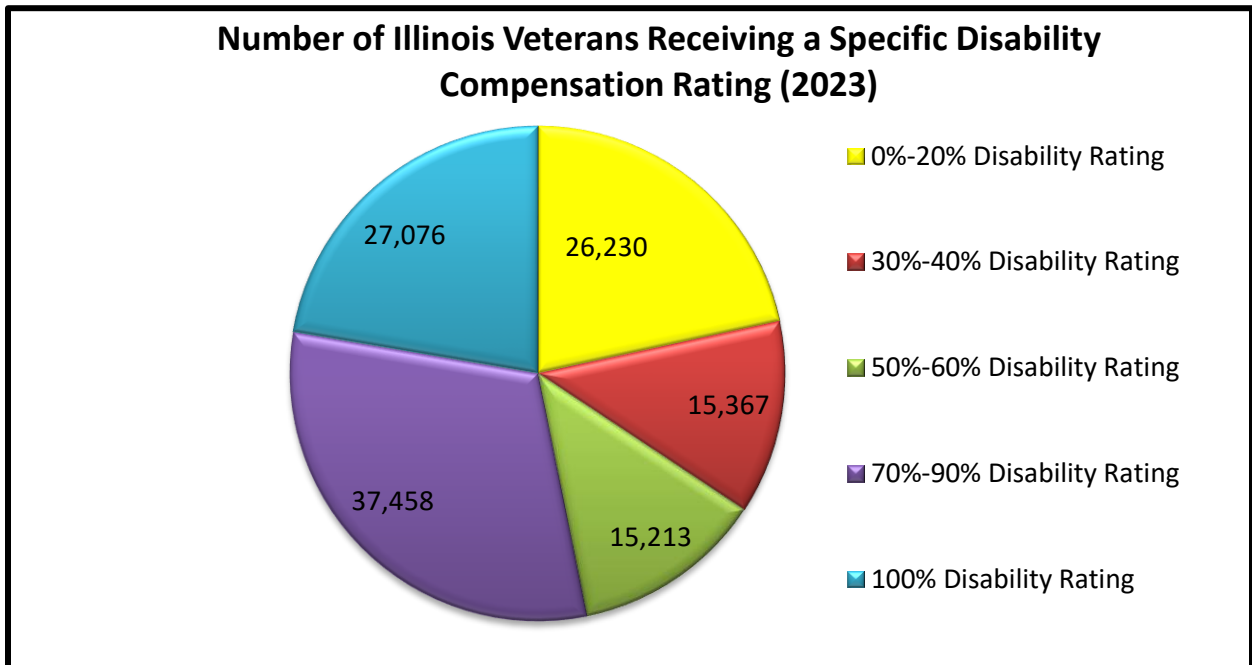


Figure 7. Total number of veterans in Illinois receiving a specific Service-Connected Disability Compensation rating. More than half of the veterans in Illinois who have a Service-Connected Disability Compensation rating are rated as 70% or higher. *FY 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [5]

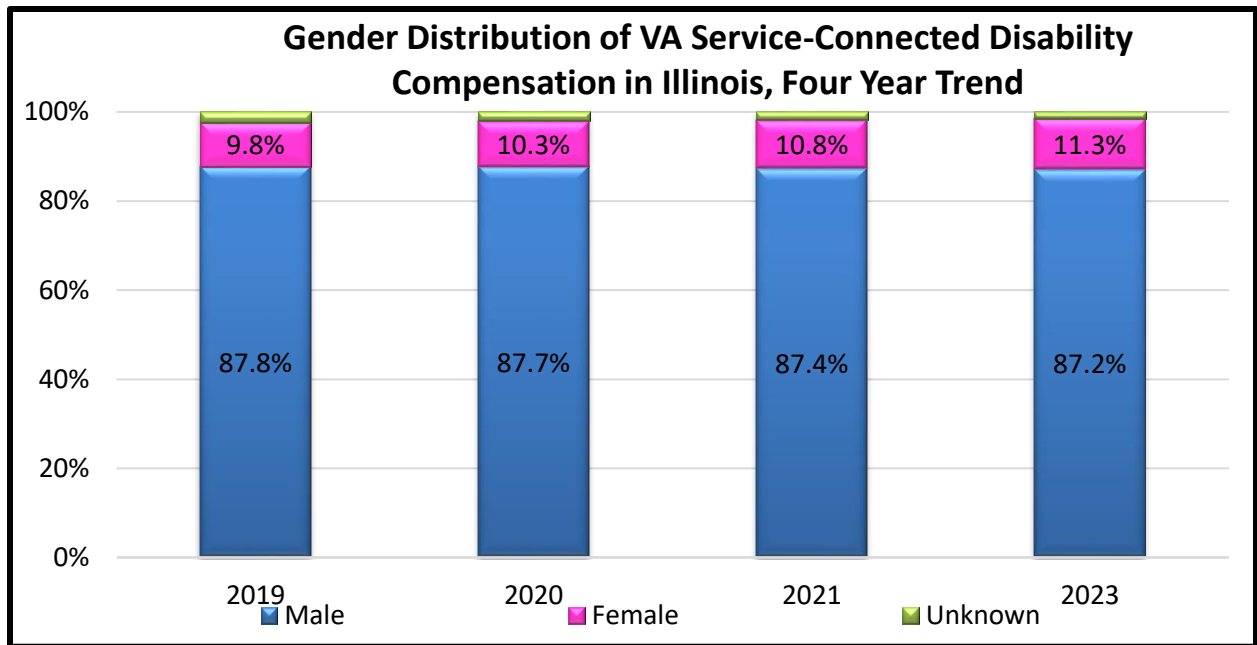


Figure 8. Percentage of Service-Connected Disability Compensation benefits recipients by gender in Illinois for the last three Federal Fiscal Years. Female veterans continue to represent a growing share of those receiving Service-Connected Disability Compensation benefits as they continue to represent an expanding portion of the overall veterans' population. Consistent with that, our Association has established and filled the position of Women's Veterans Representative. *FY 2022 and 2024 Data is not yet available from the VA. [5]

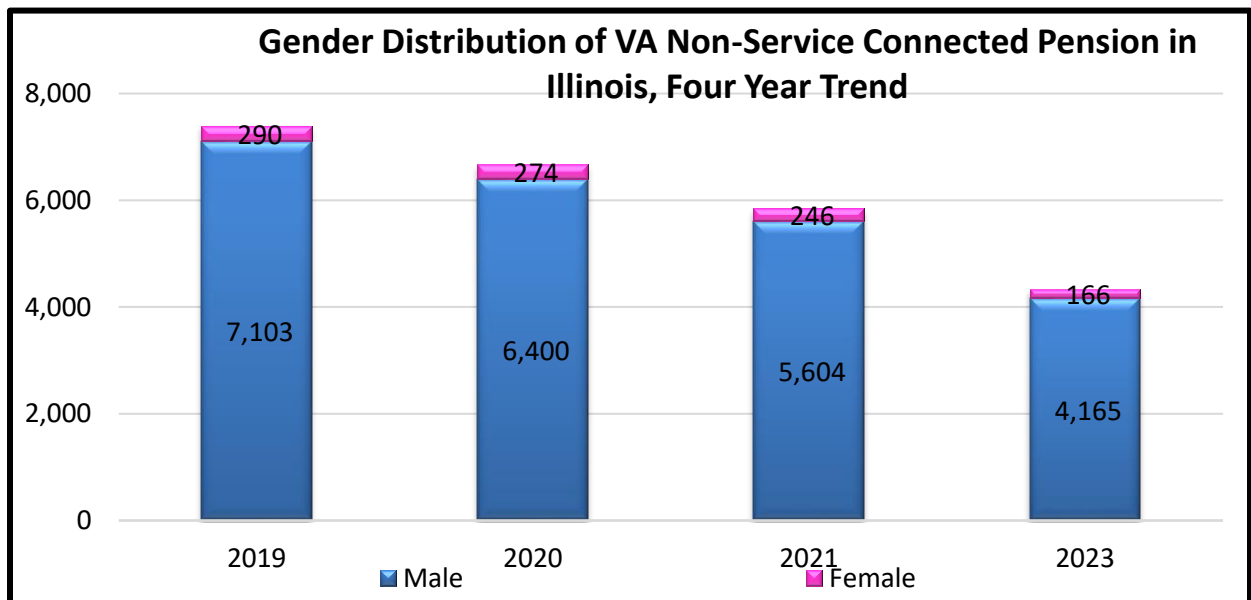


Figure 9. Total number of veterans receiving a VA Non-Service Connected Pension benefit in Illinois with gender distribution. The overall pension recipients have been declining while the number of compensation recipients has been rising. This benefit is in large part awarded to veterans who are over the age of 65. Female veteran representation of this benefit is skewed by age, as the percentage of elderly veterans who are female is drastically lower than those who are younger. *FY 2022 and 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [6]

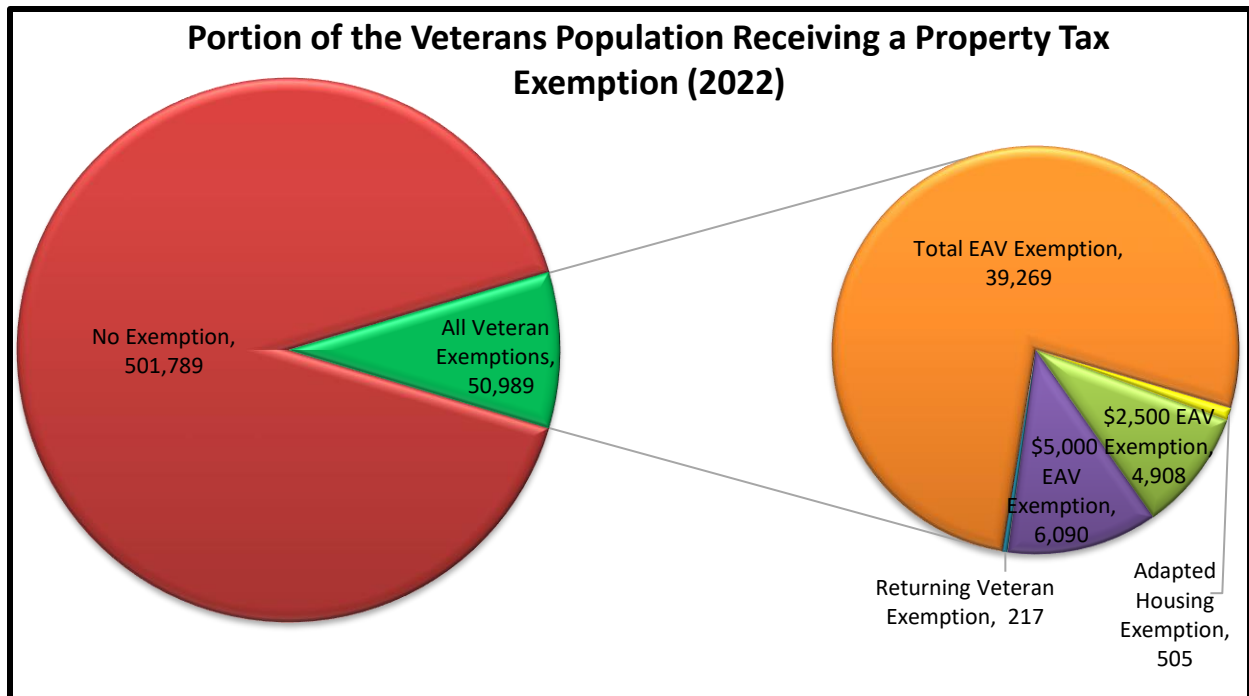


Figure 10. *Despite critics messaging to the contrary, veterans receiving a property tax exemption is negligible considering only 9.2% of the veteran's population receives a property tax exemption and that veterans only make up 4.4% of the 12,582,032 people who live in the State of Illinois. *FY 2023 and 2024 data is not yet available from the Illinois Department of Revenue. [7] [8]*

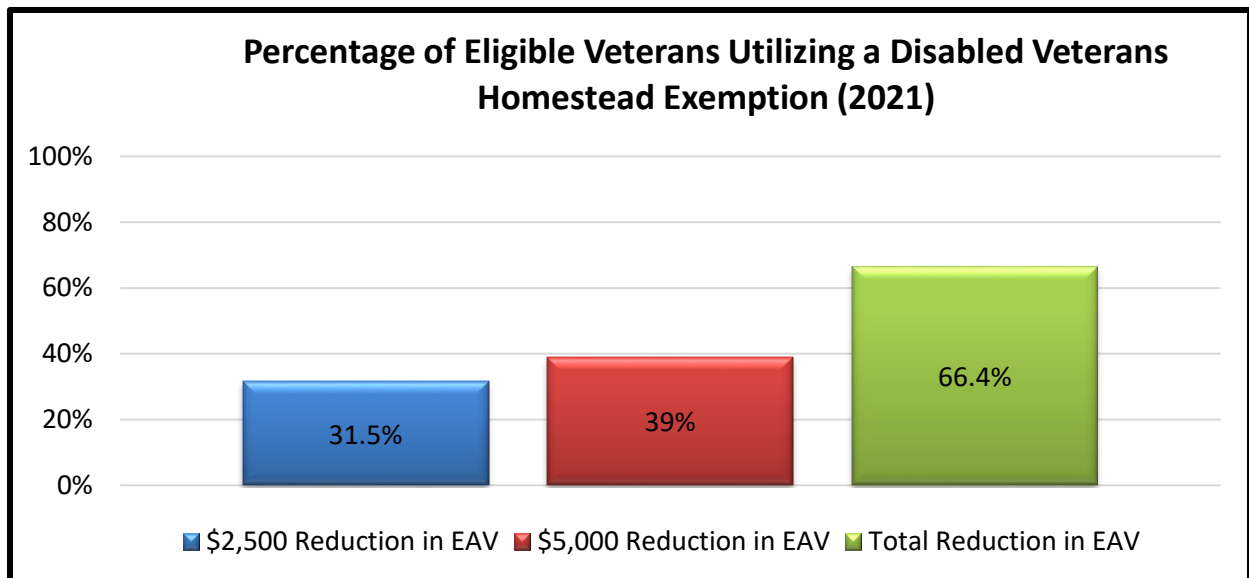


Figure 11. *This chart represents the percentage of veterans who are eligible for a specific Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption actually utilizing that exemption. For instance, only 31.5% of veterans in Illinois rated at 30% or 40% disabled by the VA are receiving the \$2,500 reduction in Equalized Assessed Value under the exemption. One reason could be that the total exemption for 70%-100% disabled veterans makes home ownership more attainable. *Fiscal Year 2022, 2023 and 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. And FY 2023 and 2024 data is not yet available from the Illinois Department of Revenue. [5] [7]*

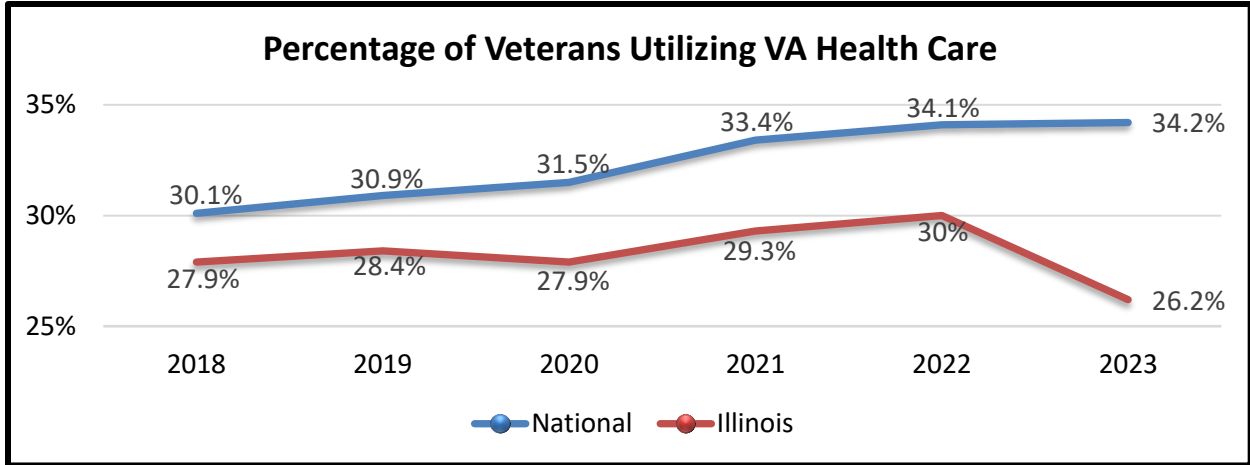


Figure 12. This chart contrasts the percentage of veterans utilizing the VA for their health care statewide and nationally. *Fiscal Year 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [1]

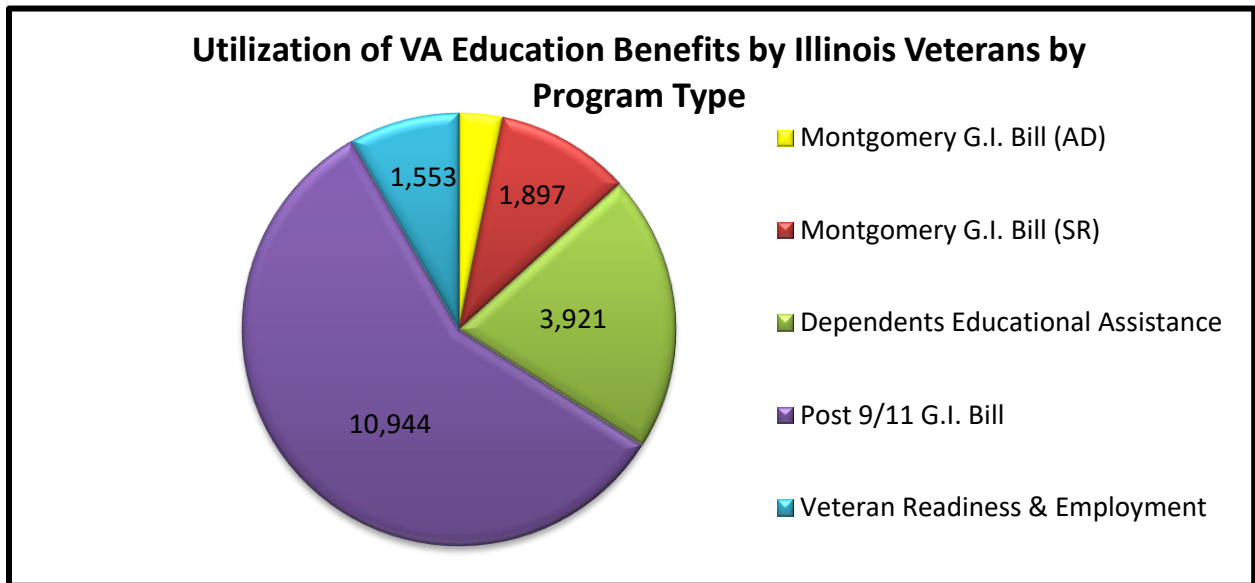


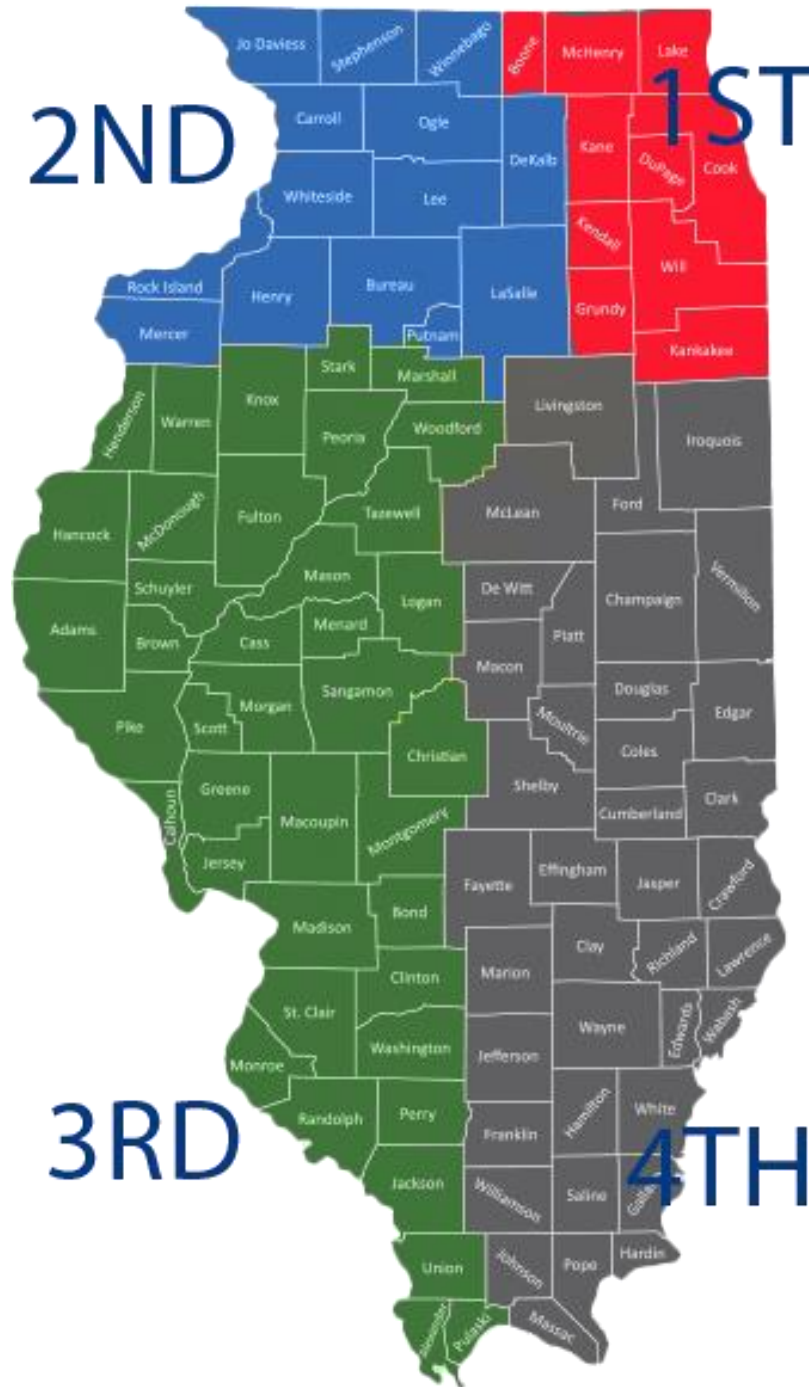
Figure 13. This graphic shows the breakdown of Illinois' veterans' use of various education benefits offered by the VA. *Fiscal Year 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [9]

<u>2023 Miscellaneous VA Statistics</u>	<u>Illinois</u>	<u>United States</u>
Life Insurance Payments:	\$19,219,523	\$692,245,470
Total Face Value of Life Insurance:	\$143,463,527	\$5,167,244,712
Total Number of Life Insurance Policies:	10,057	383,649
Number of Home Loans Guaranteed:	8,038	400,695
Total Amount of Home Loans:	\$2,246,957,254	\$144,595,708,543

Figure 14. Miscellaneous VA benefits statistics contrasted between Illinois and the United States. *Fiscal Year 2024 data is not yet available from the VA. [9]

Section VI: Veterans Assistance Commission Directory

Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions Division Map



<p>Adams County 3701 East Lake Center, Suite 3 Quincy, IL 62305 Phone: (217) 515-2822 Fax: (217) 214-6336 phavermale@adamscountyil.gov</p>	<p>Boone County 130 South State Street, Suite 212 Belvidere, IL 61008 Phone: (815) 544-6464 Fax: (815) 544-6455 vacboone@vacbc.org</p>
<p>Carroll County 17612 East Benton Street Mount Carroll, IL 61053 Phone: (815) 906-0133 Fax: (815) 906-0135 superintendent@cc-vac.org</p>	<p>Champaign County 1776 East Washington Street Urbana, IL 61802 Phone: (217) 819-3556 Fax: (217) 384-3896 cheryl.walker@champaigncountyil.gov</p>
<p>Cook County 1100 South Hamilton Avenue Suite C-O11 Lower Level Chicago, IL 60612 Phone: (312) 433-6010 Fax: (312) 433-6015 vacc@cookcountyil.gov</p>	<p>DeKalb County 2500 North Annie Glidden Road, Suite A DeKalb, IL 60115 Phone: (815) 756-8129 Fax: (815) 748-2142 tanderson@dekalbcounty.org</p>
<p>DuPage County 421 North County Farm Road, 2nd Floor Wheaton, IL 60187 Phone: (630) 407-5655 Fax: (630) 407-5656 steven.fixler@dupagecounty.gov</p>	<p>Effingham County 1011 Ford Avenue Effingham, IL 62401 Phone: (217) 342-4979 Fax: (217) 342-4883 vac@effinghamcountyil.gov</p>
<p>Franklin County 901 Public Square Benton, IL 62812 Phone: (618) 435-9868 Fax: None liam.mungovan@franklincountyil.gov</p>	<p>Fulton County 260 West Lincoln Avenue Lewistown, IL 61542 Phone: (309) 547-7262 Fax: (309) 518-8116 fultcovac@yahoo.com</p>

<p>Greene County 519 North Main Street, Room 5 Carrolton, IL 62016 Phone: (217) 370-8779 Fax: (217) 942-5431</p>	<p>Grundy County 1320 Union Street Morris, IL 60450 Phone: (815) 941-3152 Fax: (815) 513-5018 vac@grundycountyil.gov</p>
<p>Hancock County 2005 East US Highway 136 Carthage, IL 62321 Phone: (217) 617-7635 Fax: None hancockcountyvac@gmail.com</p>	<p>Henderson County 307 Warren Street Oquawka, IL 61469 Phone: (309) 221-0169 Fax: (309) 867-2033 vachc@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Henry County 307 West Center Street Cambridge, IL 61238 Phone: (309) 937-3451 Fax: (309) 937-2796 vet@henrycty.com</p>	<p>Iroquois County 1001 East Grant Street Watseka, IL 60970 Phone: (815) 432-2721 Fax: (815) 432-0485 jingram@co.iroquois.il.us</p>
<p>Jersey County 201 West Pearl Street Jerseyville, IL 62052 Phone: (618) 498-1810 Fax: (618) 498-7404 vacgb1977@outlook.com</p>	<p>Kane County 719 South Batavia Avenue, Building A Geneva, IL 60134 Phone: (630) 232-3550 Fax: (630) 232-5403 zimmermanjacob@kanecountyil.gov</p>
<p>Kankakee County 581 William Latham Sr. Drive, Suite 302 Bourbonnais, IL 60914 Phone: (815) 937-8489 Fax: (815) 937-3655 ksmietanski@k3county.net</p>	<p>Kendall County 811 West John Street Yorkville, IL 60560 Phone: (630) 553-8355 Fax: (630) 553-0003 tstubinger@kendallcountyil.gov</p>

<p>Knox County 121 South Prairie Street, Suite 3 Galesburg, IL 61401 Phone: (309) 345-3877 Fax: (309) 342-7597 rgrose@knoxcountyil.gov</p>	<p>Lake County 1790 Nations Drive, Suite 221 Gurnee, IL 60031 Phone: (847) 377-3344 Fax: (847) 984-5750 veterans@lakecountyil.gov</p>
<p>LaSalle County 4231 Progress Boulevard, Unit 4 Peru, IL 61354 Phone: (815) 433-1761 Fax: (815) 433-6209 chammers@lasallecountyil.gov</p>	<p>Lee County 309 South Galena Avenue, Suite 101 Dixon, IL 61021 Phone: (815) 288-5683 Fax: (815) 284-5240 jgorman@countyoflee.org</p>
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<p>McLean County 200 West Front Street, Suite 400D Bloomington, IL 61701 Phone: (309) 888-5140 Fax: (309) 888-5570 jerry.vogler@mcleancountyil.gov</p>	<p>Mercer County 100 Southeast Third Street Aledo, IL 61231 Phone: (309) 582-2714 Fax: (309) 628-0132 MercoVAC@mercercountyil.org</p>
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Glossary of Terms

Compensation: See “Disability Compensation”

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC): A tax-free monetary benefit paid to eligible survivors of military service members who died in the line of duty or eligible survivors of veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

Disability Compensation: A tax-free monetary benefit paid to veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred in or aggravated during active military service.

Functional Zero: A goal reached when the number of veterans experiencing homelessness within a community is less than the average number of veterans being connected with permanent housing each month.

Intent-to-File: An application for veterans and survivors who intend to file a claim for VA compensation, pension, or survivors’ benefits which preserves the effective date of future benefits while the claimant is gathering supporting documentation for their formal claim.

Non-Service Connected Pension: A tax-free needs-based monetary benefit paid to wartime veterans, who meet certain age or non-service connected disability requirements.

Pension: See “Non-Service Connected Pension”

Pension Management Center: A department at certain VA Regional Offices that is responsible for processing and adjudicating claims for pension, survivor’s pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, and burial benefits.

Regional Office: One of 56 VA offices located nationwide responsible for processing and adjudicating VA benefits which primarily includes disability compensation.

Superintendent: Supervisor who has the executive powers of the Veterans Assistance Commission.

Survivor’s Pension: A tax-free needs-based monetary benefit payable to a low-income, unremarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased wartime veteran.

VA Health Care: A comprehensive medical benefits package available to qualifying veterans which includes primary and specialty care at VA hospitals and clinics.

Veterans Service Officer: An individual accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and trained to assist veterans and their dependents in filing claims for benefits with the VA.

Work/Study Student: A veteran student who is using VA education benefits and paid by the VA to do VA related work at no cost to the County.

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