



WDVA

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

**BIENNIAL
REPORT
2019-2021**

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BIENNIAL REPORT 2019-2021

Organizational Overview

Wisconsin has earned a distinguished reputation nationally for instituting programs and services that meet the needs of its residents who served in the U.S. armed forces and their families. The state's proud tradition of providing these services began soon after the Civil War to alleviate the suffering of destitute veterans and their families.

Today, WDVA provides an array of benefits and services to eligible state veterans and in some instances, veterans' family members. WDVA works closely with county veterans service officers (CVSOs), tribal veterans service officers (TVSOs), veterans service organizations (VSOs), the University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin Technical College System, Office of the State Public Defender (OPD), Wisconsin Department of Revenue, and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

WDVA's Mission is to work on behalf of Wisconsin's veteran community in recognition of their service and sacrifice to our state and nation.

The programs administered by the department are designed to provide health, housing, educational, and economic assistance to specified veterans of the armed forces of the United States. Programs include:

- Skilled nursing.
- Memorial cemeteries and military funeral honors.
- Federal veterans claims assistance.
- Housing, mental health, and crisis services.
- Grants to individuals and organizations.
- Historical and educational promotion.

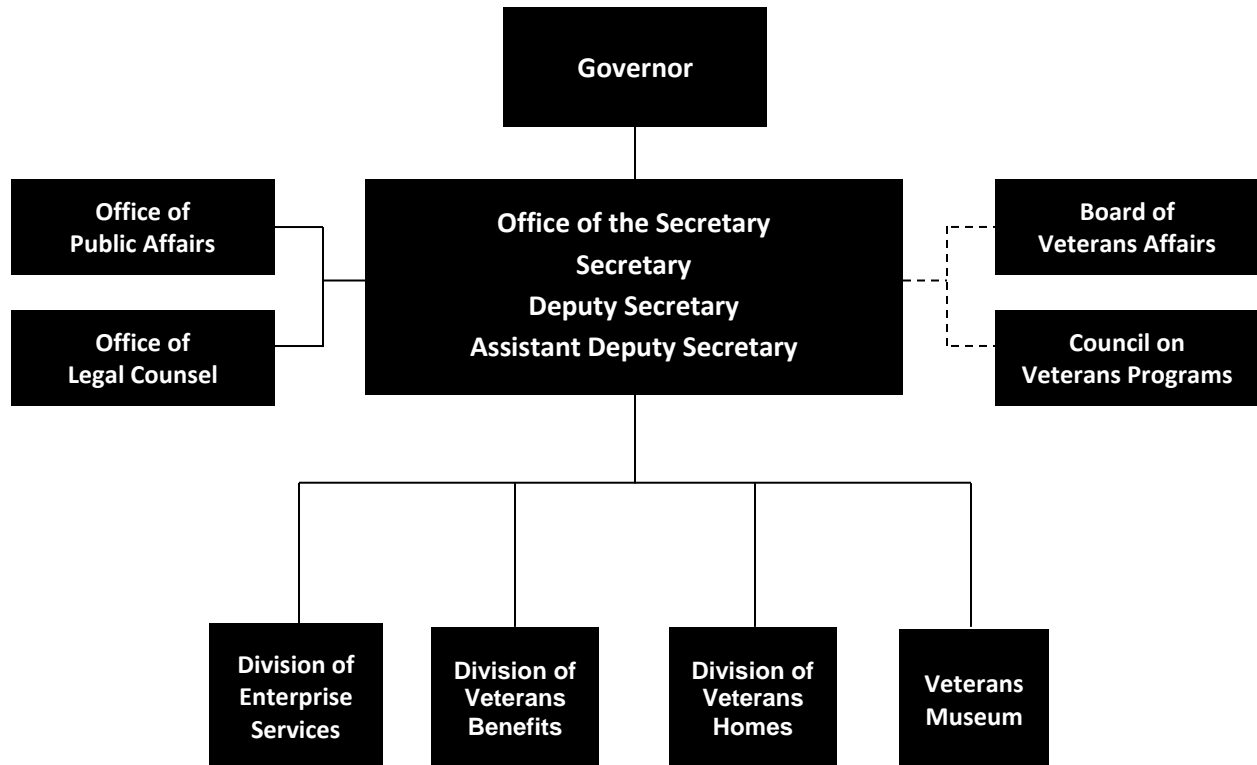
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WDVA is headed by a Secretary who is appointed by the Governor. The Secretary administers the department through the Deputy Secretary, Assistant Deputy Secretary, and Division Administrators. Working with external stakeholders, the Secretary provides the vision to enable the department to establish long-range strategies, plan for the future, and achieve its mission.

AFFILIATED BOARD AND COUNCIL

The [Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs](#) is a nine-member, part-time, citizen board that advises the department. Board members are veterans appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for staggered four-year terms.

The [Council on Veterans Programs](#) is composed of representatives from twenty-six organizations that affiliate with and advocate for veterans' issues. The Council advises the Board of Veterans Affairs and the department on solutions and policy alternatives relating to veterans' issues.



Department Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue to produce programs, benefits and services that will assist veterans in achieving employment – especially veterans who are disabled and those who are members of historically underserved populations, such as veterans of color, women, and LGBTQ.
- Explore more ways to increase outreach.
- Establish a long-term plan for the future of veterans homes throughout the state.
- Provide additional staffing for the Wisconsin Veterans Homes to adjust to the changing demographics that include more aged individuals and those with greater medical needs.
- Continue to provide top-quality care to all members at the Department’s skill nursing facilities.

Part-time Employment and Flexible-time Schedules

The WDVA, like most other cabinet agencies, transitioned to a fully remote work environment at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic for agency employees not working in one of the State Veterans Homes. Our information technology bureau worked around the clock to ensure staff had appropriate equipment and software to continue working and providing services to veterans and their spouses in the State of Wisconsin. The WDVA is currently working on a return to work plan to incorporate those employees back in to the workplace in a hybrid model. That hybrid model will include a mixture of remote work and office work.

Current policy allows supervisors not located in our Veterans Homes the ability to work directly with their employees to create flexibility with their work start and stop times, while also ensuring

that department employees are available to assist the public during the state's office hours of 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Due to the nature of the work performed at the State Veterans Homes and the need to be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, there is less opportunity for the department to be flexible with work schedules in order to ensure appropriate coverage to care for the needs of those veterans in our State Veterans Homes. The WDVA has worked to create more part time opportunities at both King and Union Grove Veterans Homes to attract and retain employees. The WDVA also implemented a weekend work program to allow more flexibility to those who preferred to be home on weekdays to care for family members, eliminate the need for daycare or to pursue further education.

Division of Veterans Benefits

The Division of Veterans Benefits administers an array of grants, benefits, programs, and services to all eligible state veterans, their families, survivors, and to many organizations that serve veterans. Assistance to veterans includes education grants to expand employment opportunities, transportation assistance to ensure veterans can access VA medical services, additional medical support and services not provided by the USDVA, and intervention services for veterans experiencing life's many forms of hardship. The division also maintains responsibility for the department's Military Funeral Honors program and the three state veterans cemeteries, located in Spooner, King, and Union Grove.

In November of 2019, the division was reorganized and is now comprised of three bureaus.

BUREAU OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Bureau of Programs and Services is comprised of the Veterans Assistance Section, the Veterans Claims Unit, and the State Approving Agency (SAA).

VETERANS ASSISTANCE SECTION

The Veterans Assistance Section consists of the Grants Unit and the Veterans Benefits Resource Center (VBRC).

The Grants Unit administers a number of grants to individuals and organizations.

Veterans Retraining Grant – Provides up to \$3,000 to recently unemployed or underemployed veterans who demonstrate financial need while enrolled in a training program expected to lead to employment.

FY 2020 Grant recipient summary

- Number of recipients: 10
- 70% were male
- 10% identified as a person of color; 40% identified as Caucasian; 30% not identified
- Average age: 47 years
- 50% attained 12 years or fewer of education
- 50% attained an associate's degree
- 40% confirmed a disability status
- 40% reported finding employment after receiving training
- 10% retired after receiving training
- 50% reported an increase in income after completing training
- Average increase in income: 103%
- 1 grantee is deceased

FY 2021 Grant recipient summary

- Number of recipients: 9
- 89% were male
- 11% identified as a person of color; 33% identified as Caucasian; 56% not identified
- Average age: 41 years
- 55% attained 12 years or fewer of education
- 22% attained an associate's degree
- 22% attained a bachelor's degree
- 11% confirmed a disability status
- 33% reported an unemployed or underemployed status after receiving training
- 67% with unknown employment status
- 11% reported 2% decrease in income after completing training
- 22% reported no change in income after completing training
- 56% did not report income level

Grants to Employers – Provides funding of up to \$100,000 to employers who hire veterans with a federal service-connected disability rating of at least 50 percent.

Veterans Education Reimbursement Grants (VetEd) – Provides tuition and fee reimbursement to eligible veterans enrolled at most Wisconsin academic institutions. The VetEd grant provides up to eight semesters or 120 credits towards a bachelor's degree, depending on length of active service.

Veterans Assistance Grants (VAG) -- formerly known as the Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant (ANVG) – Provides assistance for veterans who need vision, dental, or hearing care, three areas not normally covered by the federal VA. This program also provides temporary emergency financial aid to veterans and their household when the veteran experiences a loss of income due to an injury, illness, or natural disaster, and provides assistance to a veteran's dependents in the event of financial loss due to a deployment or death of a veteran while serving on active duty.

County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) Grants – Supplements the operations of county veterans services offices. The grants for counties with a full-time CVSO are based on total county population. The grants for counties with a part-time CVSO are given a flat rate.

Tribal Veterans Service Office (TVSO) / American Indian Veterans Service (AIVS) Grants – Supplements the operations of Tribal Veterans Service Offices. The department made annual grants of up to \$15,000 to eligible, federally-recognized American Indian tribes and bands.

Veterans Service Organization (VSO) Grants – Provides financial assistance of up to \$175,000 to veterans' service organizations that are located at the Milwaukee Regional Office and assist veterans with claims for benefits from the USDVA.

Transportation Grants – Provides grants to the Wisconsin Department of Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and to counties with veterans not served by the DAV, to provide transportation services to veterans traveling to USDVA-approved medical appointments.

Grants to Local Governments – Provides grants up to \$300,000 biennially to local governments, cities, villages, and towns for providing fire and emergency medical services to veterans homes.

Grants to Nonprofit Organizations – Provides funding of up to \$250,000 for grants to nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their

families. WDVA also provides funding of up to \$400,000 for grants to nonprofit organizations that provide entrepreneurship training, technical or business assistance, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.

Camp American Legion Grant – Provides funding of up to \$75,000 for the operation of Camp American.

**Veterans Trust Fund Grant Disbursements
(July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021)¹**

Grant Program	Number Awarded	Amount
Veterans Retraining Grant	19	\$55,900
Assistance to Needy Veterans	377	\$149,313
Veterans Education Grant	27	\$74,654
CVSO Grant	142	\$149,600
TVSO Grant	20	\$220,000
VSO Grant	5	\$393,136
Transportation Grants	65	\$599,339
Camp American Legion	2	\$145,530
Grants to Employers	28	\$79,340
Nonprofit Grant	25	\$500,000
Entrepreneurship Grant	9	\$788,740
Municipalities Grant	8	\$300,000
Camp American Legion Grant	2	\$145,530
Totals	728	\$3,582,478

The Veterans Benefits Resource Center (VBRC) provides veterans improved access to information about the department’s programs, benefits, and services via phone, chat (through WDVA’s website), walk-in, and email communications. The goal of the VBRC is to ensure that veterans who contact WDVA during business hours will be able to immediately speak to center support staff who are trained to provide information about the department’s programs, benefits, and services.

The VBRC uses an information system that enables customer service history and physical mailing of information to the veteran when needed. The VBRC records metrics that capture trends in veterans’ requests and enable quality improvement efforts to be based on data.

¹ Data source: VBATS

Veterans Assistance Section Accomplishments

- Processed 26,888 applications for benefits (not including grants).
- VBRC responded to 17,149 incoming calls and 6,678 chats.
- VBRC received a 96.33% satisfaction rating from client surveys.
- Issued 168 Veteran-Owned Business Certifications to increase the opportunity for veteran firms to sell their products and services to the state of Wisconsin.
- Introduced the Wisconsin Veteran Student Assistance Grant program for private non-profit member institutions of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU).
- Sent informational packets regarding state and federal benefits, programs, services, and employment resources to 6,462 recently separated military veterans.
- Modified the [MyWisVets benefits portal](#) to improve the user interface, adding a benefits eligibility guide to the homepage outlining eligibility documentation requirements, and adding criteria to enable online applications for Veterans Homes.

Veterans Assistance Section Upcoming Initiatives

- Publish an instructional document explaining next steps and reducing the complexity of the Wisconsin GI Bill tuition remission application process.
- Develop a structured training program that covers all VBRC responsibilities and tasks, in addition to monthly generalized training with the Milwaukee Claims Office.
- Develop a method to cross reference Claims Office data to automate verification of a veteran's or surviving spouse's VA disability, which would greatly decrease the number of Property Tax Credit applications that must be placed on hold to request further documentation.

VETERANS CLAIMS UNIT

The Veterans Claims Unit assists Wisconsin veterans and their dependents with federal claims for compensation, pension, education, medical care, and death benefits provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). The unit, located at the USDVA Regional Office in Milwaukee, also supplies accreditation and continuing education training to the state County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs and TVSOs).

Claims Unit Accomplishments

- Processed 5,681 claims on behalf of Wisconsin veterans.
- Conducted 534 hearings regarding veterans' benefits and appeals.

STATE APPROVING AGENCY

The federally funded SAA provides institutional oversight for Wisconsin colleges, universities, and vocational training facilities under US Code Title 38 and Title 10 for eligibility under federal GI Bill education benefits. The SAA conducts compliance survey visits at these institutions to determine compliance with requirements of state and federal law. The SAA is responsible for evaluating programs at all facilities and testing organizations and makes a determination to approve/deny programs and facilities for GI Bill eligibility. In addition, the SAA has jurisdiction for any program approval in private, for-profit institutions, non-college degree institutions, and non-accredited institutions. The SAA also provides consultation and technical assistance to school officials, veterans, and other eligible individuals and organizations regarding federal GI Bill benefits and approval criteria.

State Approving Authority Accomplishments

- Earned a “Satisfactory” rating from the Joint Peer Review Group for both FY 2020 and 2021. Satisfactory is the highest rating available.
- Completed 28 compliance surveys in each of the fiscal years 2020 and 2021.
- Successfully completed a 100% review of all state public and private not-for-profit colleges and universities.
- Conducted 88 total site visits providing assistance, conducting assessments, and inspecting learning institutions within the state.

BUREAU OF HEALTH SERVICES

The Bureau of Health Services operates the Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP) and the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP).

VETERANS OUTREACH AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

The Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP) connects Wisconsin veterans to community services and provides case management and support with a special focus on treatment and recovery. VORP case managers work with participants to identify issues and barriers that may prevent them from living the life they want and uncovering solutions to achieve their goals. Based on the needs, strengths, and values of each participant, and in collaboration with community service providers, VORP connects participants to a variety of programs and services designed to meet their unique needs until they reach their goals. VORP staff works to provide many support services to veterans including mental health services, substance use treatment, financial assistance, housing and utilities assistance, claims and benefits assistance, and employment and education opportunities.

Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program Accomplishments

- Provided over \$100,000 in treatment and emergency services for veterans experiencing hardship.
- Conducted 3,486 hours of case management services by program coordinators.
- Provided services to 889 veterans.

VETERANS HOUSING AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

The Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) is designed to help homeless veterans receive the job training, education, counseling, and rehabilitative services they need to obtain steady employment, affordable housing, and the skills to sustain a productive lifestyle. The goal of VHRP is to break the cycle of homelessness and help veterans transition back into the mainstream of society. To achieve this goal, transitional veterans housing centers are located in Chippewa Falls, Green Bay, and Union Grove Wisconsin. These centers partner with federal, state, and local governments, county veterans service offices, and representatives from local communities to operate a statewide coalition providing outreach and an extensive referral network that enables the program to provide housing to over 100 homeless veterans.

Veterans Housing and Recovery Program Accomplishments

- Provided services to 178 veterans for temporary or emergency shelter.
- Accommodated over 20,000 nights of shelter (number of veterans sheltered time the number of nights sheltered).
- Successfully transitioned 112 veterans to permanent housing.
- With closure of King’s MacArthur Hall VHRP, rehoused veterans at other VHRP sites or assisted with relocating the veteran to their home community.

Veterans Housing and Recovery Program Upcoming Initiatives

In FY 2022, funded in whole or in part by federal grants the department anticipates the purchase of a suitable property to relocate the Chippewa Falls VHRP and plans to renovate the Green Bay and Union Grove facilities.

BUREAU OF CEMETERIES AND MEMORIAL SERVICES

The Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services operates and maintains the three veterans cemeteries throughout the state of Wisconsin and operates the Military Funeral Honors Program.

WISCONSIN VETERANS CEMETERIES

The Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services manages three state veterans cemeteries: Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (NWVMC) in Spooner; Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (CWVMC) in King; and Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) in Union Grove. These cemeteries provide a final resting place for veterans and to create a lasting monument to their achievements and sacrifices on behalf of our grateful nation.

To date, the three cemeteries combined have interred 33,709 veterans, spouses, and dependents and pre-registered 24,017 requests for interment.

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS PROGRAM

The mission of the Military Funeral Honors Program is to provide and coordinate the appropriate final tribute to eligible Wisconsin veterans acknowledging their faithful and honorable service to the State of Wisconsin. The program coordinates military funeral honors at any of the cemeteries across the state and conducts military funeral honors at the three state veterans cemeteries. Additionally, program staff process stipends to reimburse veterans organizations which provide military honors.

Bureau of Cemeteries Accomplishments

- Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery is one of the busiest state veterans cemeteries in the nation. SWVMC conducted over 1,300 interments during FY 2021, a 33% increase from the previous year.
- Total interments across all Wisconsin state Veterans cemeteries increased by 41% in FY 2021.
- Military Funeral Honors Program coordinated 9,994 military funeral honors in the state, and processed 13,303 stipends, reimbursing a total of \$665,150 to veterans' organizations.

Bureau of Cemeteries Upcoming Initiatives

Priority 1 expansion projects at SWVMC in Union Grove and CWVMC in King will provide additional crypt, columbarium, and urn garden space. These projects will enable facilities to keep up with the increasing demand for burial at state veterans cemeteries.

Division of Veterans Homes

The Division of Veterans Homes provides long-term and short-term rehabilitative care to veterans and eligible spouses and Gold Star parents at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes located in King, Union Grove, and Chippewa Falls.

The Veterans Home at King provides skilled nursing services for up to 521 members. The Veterans Home at Union Grove provides skilled nursing services for up to 158 members. The

Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls provides skilled nursing services for up to 72 members and is unique from the other homes in that the WDVA contracts the operations of the facility to a private healthcare provider.

Division of Veterans Homes Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue our commitment to member safety during a worldwide pandemic, highly affecting the elderly in our care. For the past 18 months the homes staff have borne the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff has done a remarkable job day in and day out by following ever-changing required safety protocols, offering comfort, and caring for members who have had COVID-19, supporting their peers out of the work unit with COVID-exposure, and working with families and volunteers to try and keep some semblance of normalcy in our Homes. This truly is our most important task.
- Open newly constructed Moses Hall on the King campus to members in early 2022; close Olson Hall on the King campus.
- Build one brand for all State Veterans homes in Wisconsin through collaborative marketing and media efforts. New collateral, marketing materials and web designs have been completed with final steps in process.
- Continue progress toward the *Smoke Free by 2025* plan for all State Veterans Homes, in alignment with USDVA Directive 10.85 that requires Federal VA facilities be smoke-free.

WISCONSIN VETERANS HOME AT KING

The Veterans Home at King is located on a 325-acre campus, one mile southwest of the town of Waupaca and is the largest skilled nursing facility in the state.

Four individual skilled nursing facilities at King are Medicare-certified and individually licensed: 205 beds in Ainsworth Hall, 116 beds in MacArthur Hall, 200 beds in Olson Hall, and 200 beds in Stordock Hall (currently closed). More than three-quarters of all beds are in private rooms.

In addition to skilled nursing, dietary, maintenance, and housekeeping, King provides a variety of ancillary services.

Veterans Home at King Accomplishments

- With several years of significantly reduced census, Stordock hall was closed, and membership transitioned to the remaining three residential buildings for efficiency and in anticipation of the new Moses building.
- The construction of Moses Hall, DVA's new state-of-the-art long term care facility, continues on schedule for opening to members in early 2022.
- Moved the VHRP program out of MacArthur Hall to comply with state and federal regulatory requirements.
- Staffing levels adjusted to appropriately meet the reduced number of members on campus, by utilizing current staff to fill vacant positions that were needed on campus. Significant recruitment and retention efforts were performed for key staff, such as CNAs, RNs, and food service.
- Transitioned pharmaceuticals purchasing so that King pharmacy is now providing pharmaceuticals to all three state veterans homes.
- All halls were rated 5 Stars by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

WISCONSIN VETERANS HOME AT UNION GROVE

The Veterans Home at Union Grove is located on the campus of the Southern Wisconsin Center (SWC). The Veterans Home consists of 158-bed skilled nursing facility and offers a variety of services.

Veterans Home at Union Grove Accomplishments

- The assisted living facility, Fairchild Hall, was closed due to low levels of occupancy/demand and negative cash flow. All remaining veterans were supported in moving to the alternative living of their choice. About half moved to Boland Hall and half moved off campus.
- Significant recruitment and retention efforts were performed for key healthcare staff, such as CNAs, and RNs. Certain classifications received significant increases in sign-on bonuses or Raised Minimum Rate (RMR) to attempt to secure sufficiently stable staffing.

WISCONSIN VETERANS HOME AT CHIPPEWA FALLS

The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls is located in the city of Chippewa Falls and is licensed as a skilled nursing facility with 72 beds. This facility is contract managed by HDG, Health Dimensions Group.

Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls Accomplishments

- Recognized as a 2021 recipient of the “Commitment to Quality - Bronze” award by the American Healthcare Association and National center for Assisted Living
- Rated at 5 Stars by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).
- Maintained a 98% occupancy level.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

The WDVA operates two museums that are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Its main facility, the [Wisconsin Veterans Museum](#) (WVM) is located on the Capitol Square and contains 10,000 square feet of displays. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum-King (WVMK) is located in the F. A. Marden Memorial building on the grounds of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

The WVM employs exhibits, displays, and presentations to tell the stories of men and women from Wisconsin who served in America’s conflicts from the Civil War to today’s Global War on Terrorism. The WVM is Smithsonian-affiliated. The museum also coordinates several traveling exhibits throughout the state.

The WVM was affected by the pandemic, being closed from March 2020 until mid-2021. This delayed the planned installment and opening of new exhibits. The exhibit, titled *Souvenirs of Service: The Things They Kept*, will open November 4, 2021. A planned window exhibit on the 75th Anniversary of World War II’s end, scheduled for summer and fall 2020, is also delayed.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum Accomplishments

- Focused on building partnerships and making connections with local and state organizations, minority groups, and outreach to rural areas to assist with new collecting and exhibit strategies to gather diverse stories and collections to support those stories.

- Expanded the reach and engagement of partners and audiences across the state and the nation through digital and virtual programs, burnishing the Wisconsin Veterans Museum as an important resource and authority about Wisconsin military history.
- Engaged partners around the state for joint programming and promotion about the Desert Storm 30 and September 11th twentieth anniversaries (under the heading '91 to 9/11) and the centennial of Billy Mitchell's milestone sinking of a battleship from the air.
- During the museum's pandemic closure, staff refreshed the permanent exhibits, replacing items that needed rotation off display and adding more items to tell a more diverse array of Wisconsin veteran stories.
- Launched a collecting initiative to examine what collections areas WVM is lacking in and created relationships to bring in under-represented service members in groups such as women, LGBTQ+, people of color, smaller communities in rural Wisconsin, etc. In March 2020 this was reaffirmed as a priority. Programming in fall 2020 and early 2021 featured partners from under-represented communities, including the Ho-Chunk, African Americans, and others. The Oral History Program's *Do Tell* (focused on LGBTQ+ veterans) and the popular traveling exhibit *I Am Not Invisible* (focused on female veterans) both capture and share stories from those groups.
- Staff completed an in-person museum store audit in FY2019 and subsequently expanded the museum experience into the store and added new lines of product to focus on advertising Wisconsin military service-related items.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue examination and assessment of future needs related to location of Wisconsin Veterans Museum.
- Focus on building partnerships and making connections with local and state organizations, minority groups, and outreach to rural areas to assist with new collecting and exhibit strategies to gather diverse stories and collections to support those stories.
- Develop a 3-5-year plan for additional upcoming exhibits.
- Collaborate with partners and stakeholders in preparation for the America 250th commemoration.
- Launch collections and programs to engage under-represented service members in groups such as women, LGBTQ+, people of color, smaller communities in rural Wisconsin, etc.
- Develop operation options and a plan for increasing usage of WVM's King location.

Division of Enterprise Services

The Division of Enterprise Services (DES) provides management and program support to all of the Department's operating units and works collaboratively to achieve a streamlined administrative process.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Bureau of Information Systems (BOIS) provides information technology resources in IT support that includes customer support (Help Desk), technical support (network and desktop), application development, support for network hardware and software, desktop/laptop hardware and software, security, and telecommunication equipment. BOIS develops and maintains automated systems and processes the agency uses to support its business programs.

Bureau of Information Systems Accomplishments

- Planned and implemented the network infrastructure at the newly constructed John R. Moses Hall Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF).
- Implemented Microsoft 365 (formerly Microsoft Office) and Microsoft Teams across the agency.
- Replaced Citrix with VMware Horizon for Virtual Desktops (VDI) for Central Office and Union Grove.
- Implemented CrowdStrike for endpoint protection.
- Implemented Mitel Voice over IP (VoIP) phone system upgrades and additions to include the Veterans Benefit Resource Center, Union Grove Veteran Housing and Recovery Program, 5-digit dialing and a new call tree.
- Deployed laptops and upgraded VPN capacity to support Central Office staff remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Modified the Veterans Benefits Application Tracking System ([VBATS](#)) and [MyWisVets](#) applications to replace the Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant with the Healthcare Aid Grant and the Subsistence Aid Grant.
- Developed the new Wisconsin Veteran Student Assistance Grant web application, adding it to MyWisVets and VBATS applications. This enables WDVA to share information with the Higher Educational Aids Board to accelerate approvals for veterans attending select approved private schools.
- Developed the Claims Information Management System (CIMS) for our Milwaukee Claims Office to include tracking of legislative inquiries and management of WDVA accreditations.
- Redeveloped the Year-End Reporting and Payment Coupons to replace the accounting application and modernize the year-end process.
- Designed, developed, and launched the Capital Budget Application to assist Budget and Planning.
- Upgraded the document management system to GlobalSearch to include substantial updates to the current applications that utilize GlobalSearch.

Bureau of Information Systems Upcoming Initiatives

- Integrate other vendor systems for Moses Hall SNF including nurse call, security cameras, Vocera staff communication system, member monitoring, building automation systems and VoIP phones.
- Implement Indeavor staff scheduling system and annual vacation planning module. A future phase may include implementation of integrated time clocks for the Veterans Homes.
- Plan and implement a VoIP phone system and member safety upgrades at our Union Grove Veterans Home.
- Implement secure printing on our Ricoh multi-function devices and significantly reduce or eliminate the number of personal printers in the agency.
- Extend Moses Hall skilled nursing home technology to King's other residential halls.

- Migrate Central Office Centrex phones to Mitel Voice over IP system hosted at King.
- Redesign VBATS to modernize the application, utilizing and integrating with our new CIMS system.
- Redevelop the existing veteran support applications, allowing them to function and integrate with the new VBATS.
- Develop a Veteran Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP) application and integrate it into the new VBATS application.
- Modify the Funeral Honors application to replace most of the honors documentation faxing with updated email logic.

BUREAU OF BUDGET, POLICY AND FACILITIES (BBPF)

The BBPF develops, monitors, and manages the department's annual and biennial capital and operating budgets and provides financial, policy, and statistical analysis of department programs. BPPB staff monitors and manages all construction and building projects for the department. The bureau coordinates operational risk assessments, risk management (liability and property) and internal audit services. BPPB also coordinates the collection and analysis of demographic data concerning Wisconsin veterans.

Bureau of Budget, Policy and Facilities Accomplishments

- Oversaw the demolition of the cottages at King and monitor other projects at the Veterans Homes.
- Supported Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP) in applying for federal capital grant.
- Coordinated the completion of Phase 1A of the Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery project.
- Continued to submit and monitor grants for sixteen (16) federal construction projects.

Bureau of Budget, Policy and Facilities Upcoming Initiatives

- Oversee the demolition of Cottage 16 at Union Grove.
- Oversee the demolition of Cottages 1 and 2 at Union Grove.
- Open Moses Hall at King.

BUREAU OF FISCAL SERVICES

The BFS provides financial services for accounts payable, expense reports, purchasing cards, accounts receivable, member finance, purchasing and loan program accounting, as well as maintaining high levels of internal controls, compliance, and review procedures for all department financial and purchasing operations.

Bureau of Fiscal Services Accomplishments

- Requested, received and monitored almost \$20M in stimulus funds. This includes CARES Act funds, Consolidated Appropriation Act 2021 funds and American Rescue Plan Section 8004, PL 117-2 funds.
- Closed fund 58300 - Mortgage Loan Fund.

- Achieved efficiencies and adjusted staff workload allowing the Bureau of Fiscal Services to leave a number of positions vacant.
- Updated a number of policies to include the agency Collection and Travel Policies.
- Maintained adequate supply of COVID-19 supplies for our skilled nursing facilities.

Bureau of Fiscal Services Upcoming Initiatives

- Complete agency wide training for procurement, asset management, purchasing cards, WISBuy, accounts payable, chartfields, query, and reporting.
- Increase electronic efficiencies to reduce cost and paper storage.
- Ensure stimulus funds received are spent/obligated on eligible expenses by set deadlines and that required reporting of these funds are completed timely.