



\$179,894,566.68
~~\$88,710,000.00~~

in New Federal Veterans
Benefits from California's
Veterans Driver's License



California Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Inc.
Professional Veterans Advocates Serving
California's Veterans and their Families
2020 ANNUAL REPORT AND DIRECTORY

California VETERANS LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM



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CALVET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

www.calvet.ca.gov

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR 2019

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers enjoyed another trendsetting year of growth and transformation. While our focus is on every veteran and their family, ensuring they are connected with their hard-earned benefits, we have begun to shift specific attention to the insidious issues of homelessness, the mental health crisis and suicide; particularly and alarmingly, amongst women and LGBTQ veterans. Some of our more notable accomplishments include:

- Filing claims that generated nearly \$7 billion in compensation and pension payments to our veterans and their dependents in 2018 and being on pace to exceed that number in 2019.
- Served approximately 291,645 veterans and family members throughout the state.
- Attended 1,852 outreach events, with 87,012 veterans and family members in attendance. There were 34,623 one-on-one benefit and services sessions at these events.
- Provided services at 40 Stand Down events (for homeless veterans), with 19,822 veterans in attendance.
- Provided services at 68 job fairs with 8,308 in attendance.
- And provided numerous other services locally and at the state level.

Most counties only have County Veterans Service Officers to file their claims. The larger counties team up with the VFW, American Legion, DAV and AMVETS to make sure all veterans are served. **Our most successful partnership however, is that which we enjoy with CalVet. CACVSO and CalVet collaborate creatively to play a vital role in serving California's large and diverse veteran population. This highly successful joint effort links California veterans to the benefits they have earned and the resources they need. In 2019, CVSOs brought in \$458 million in new federal benefits for California veterans and their families.** Additionally, the quality of our technical training has improved markedly, due in large part to the seamless teamwork between these two organizations.

Our mentor program, where experienced CVSOs mentor newly appointed CVSOs, has been highly successful and has resulted in numerous counties experiencing much less transitional loss-of-continuity, enabling the new CVSOs to assimilate more rapidly.

Finally, we are committed to expanding our already considerable training and outreach efforts in order to become more culturally competent and appropriate, particularly in the areas of homelessness (nine veterans from Napa County have been awarded disability benefits) and minority veterans, so we may serve all California veterans with the honor and dignity they deserve.

Scott Holwell, President (February 2019 — February 2020)
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers



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

THE SECRETARY

For the past four years, I have had the tremendous honor of leading the State agency that is responsible for ensuring that California's nearly 1.6 million veterans have access to the benefits they have earned through their service – whether that means helping with education benefits, job training, starting a business, buying a home, or transitioning back to civilian life. At CalVet, we aim to be of service to all veterans, regardless of their age, gender, or period of service. For as many veterans that CalVet is able to assist, our partners in our California counties enhance this work.

County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) play a vital role in serving California's large and diverse veteran population, helping to link them to the benefits they have earned and the resources they need. In 2019, CVSOs brought in \$458 million in new federal benefits for California veterans and their families.

CalVet and the CVSOs experienced continued success working together in support of transitioning service members who wish to call California home. Over the last year, the California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP) was represented across 57 individual outreach events at military installations statewide to nearly 2,000 service members, veterans, and their families. We look forward to continuous collaboration with the CVSOs as CalTAP expands to support student veterans within California's public institutions of higher learning and connecting them to their community-based systems of care.

The strong, ongoing partnership between CalVet and our CVSOs is a stellar example of what we can accomplish when different levels of government work together. CVSOs and CalVet share an important mission and with each passing year, I am increasingly confident in our strong collaboration. The entire CalVet team and I greatly appreciate our CVSOs commitment to California's veterans and their families.

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

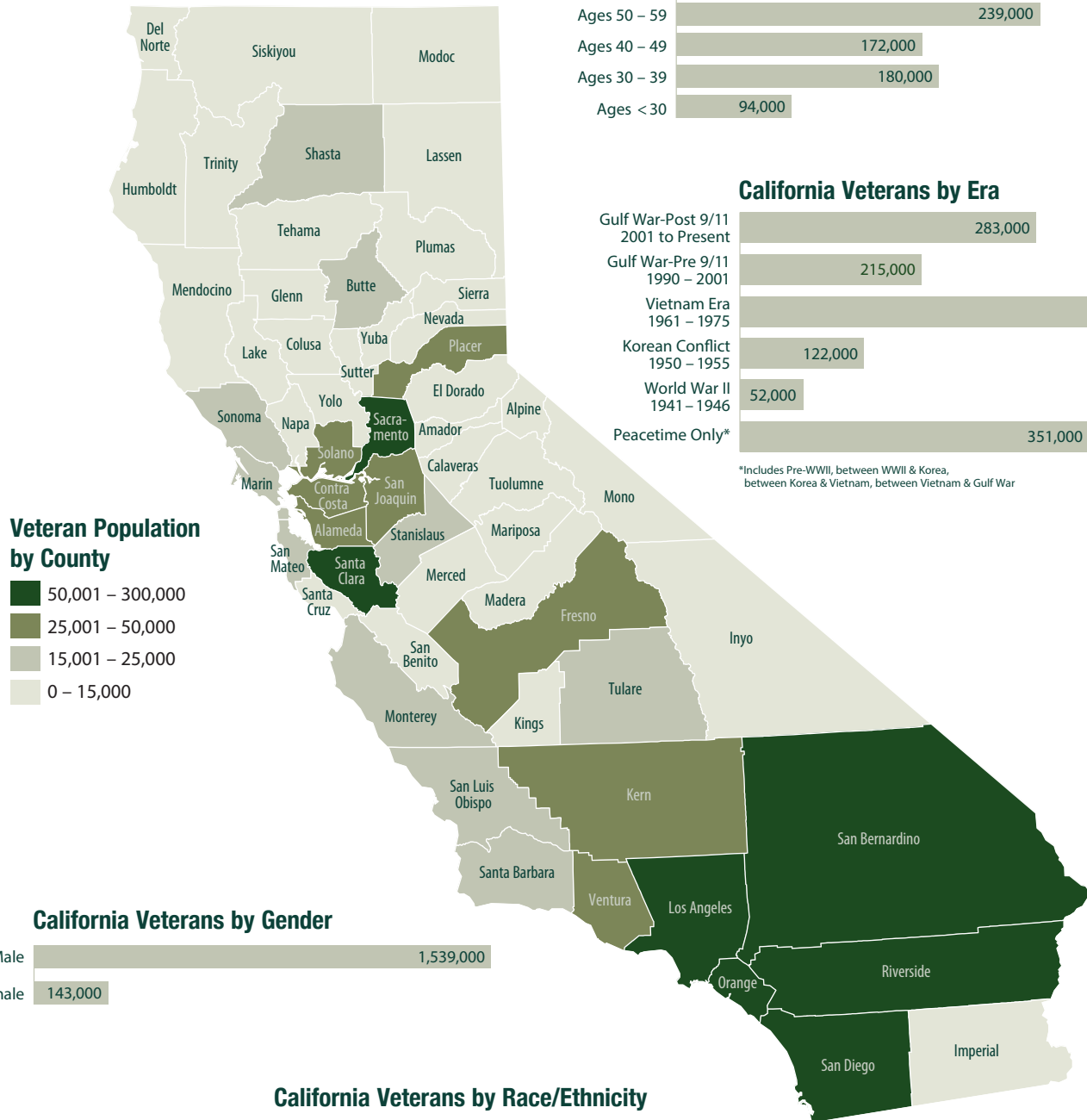
Vito Imbasciani MD

Secretary

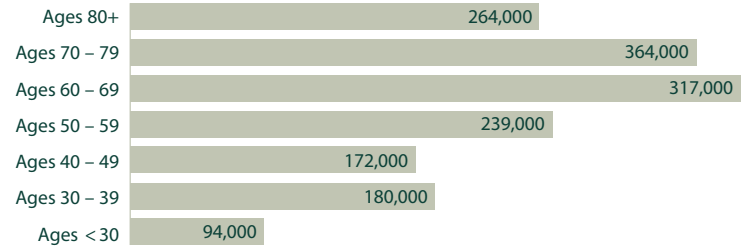
California Veterans by the Numbers

Estimated By County as of September 30, 2018

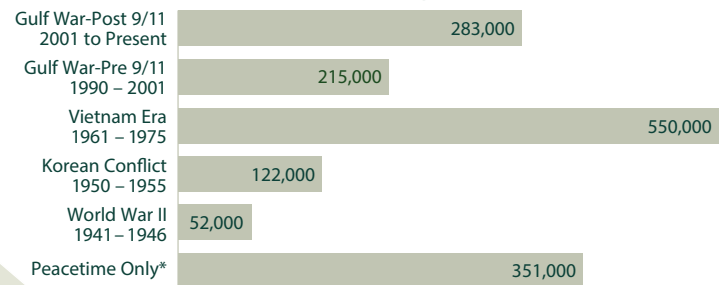
Source: USDVA VetPop 2016 (Tables 6L, 7L, 8L)



California Veterans by Age Group



California Veterans by Era



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

VETERANS BENEFITS ARE NOT LIKE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Unlike Social Security, the veterans benefit system is complicated and benefits are highly individualized

Applying for Social Security and other federal benefits is a simple, uncomplicated process. Individuals can generally do it on their own, with no professional help. The opposite is true of veterans' benefits. Without professional assistance, many veterans lose benefits they have earned by their service — often thousands of dollars a year.

Unlike other federal benefits, veterans' benefits are extremely individualized and must be applied for, otherwise benefits are lost. They depend on a wide variety of factors — when and where you served; if you served in combat; or served during a congressionally approved war-time period; the cause and severity of a disability; and other individual factors. Additionally, Congress, federal courts and the Veterans Administration are constantly changing what benefits and services those who served in the military are eligible to receive. Veterans put themselves at financial risk when they try to tackle the complex system on their own or with a nonprofessional. That's why County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) play such an important role.

Studies show veterans get more benefits when they come to a professional for help. CVSOs do the job well. In fact, they turned \$36 million in county and state funding into more than the \$505 million in benefits for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

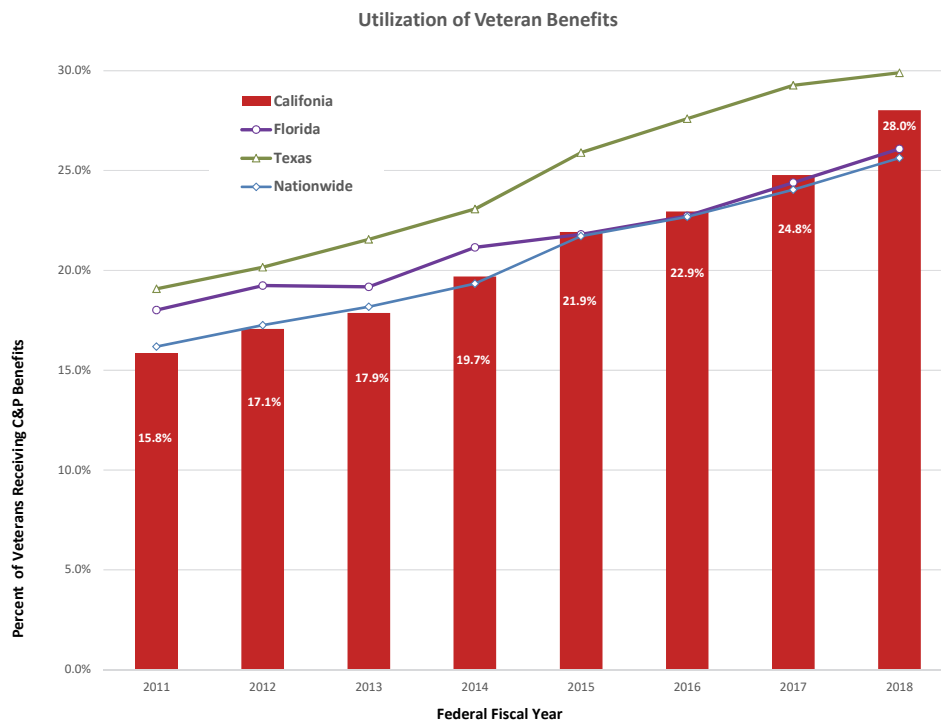
- CVSOs use their skills and experience to not only garner hundreds of millions of dollars in federal benefits, but they do it with a much-needed personal touch.
- CVSOs are not remote, paper-shuffling bureaucrats. They meet veterans face-to-face with a look that says, "We're on your side." In this relaxed environment, veterans discuss their situation freely, and the CVSO is able to develop a claim that nets the largest possible benefit.
- CVSOs walk alongside veterans, guiding them through the complex process — a real and caring person, not an anonymous voice at the end of a phone line.
- CVSOs succeed where others fail because they blend an understanding of the system with concern for the veteran sitting across the table.
- CVSOs also save the state money by connecting veterans with veteran treatment courts, homeless veterans Stand Downs and other local services. They help find homeless veterans a warm place to sleep on a cold winter night. They get at-risk veterans mental health services today, not some distant tomorrow.
- California's CVSO model puts into action the state's commitment to bringing government as close as possible to the people it serves.

Studies show veterans get more benefits when they come to a professional for help. CVSOs do the job well.

CALIFORNIA'S UTILIZATION OF VETERAN BENEFITS

California's utilization of the primary monetary veteran benefits, compensation and pension (C&P), has historically lagged behind the nation as a whole and more dramatically behind similar sized states. The end result is that some of California's veterans are being denied benefits they earned through their service. Additionally, there is a significant loss of economic impact to the state by failing to bring these federal dollars into the economy.

Looking at the chart below, we see that during fiscal years 2011-16, California's utilization rate was improving at a slightly better rate than the rates for the nation as a whole — as well as the state of Florida, specifically — but lagging well behind Texas. In fiscal year 2017, we noted a larger incremental increase in the utilization rate than historically seen, but results were too inconclusive to infer why. Finally, in 2018 we saw the fairly dramatic breakaway from the utilization rates of Florida and the nation, and significant progress on achieving our long-term goal of experiencing utilization rates similar to Texas.



Sources: USDVA Data by FY: "C&P by County", "Geographic Distribution of Expenditures", "VetPop"

What caused that dramatic improvement? We can eliminate any changes in how the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) did business or the demographics of the veteran population at-large, because changes in those types of factors would change the utilization rates throughout all veteran populations — including Texas, Florida and the nation — yet the slope of those utilization rates remains relatively constant for all years. Therefore, the causes of this dramatic improvement were internal to California and only impacted our veterans. One significant change in how California did business was the increase in general fund support from \$2.6 million to \$5.6 million that began as one-time funding in 2013-14. While it is unlikely such a small increase in state support would fully explain these results, it should be given consideration. Another factor may have been the

effort undertaken by state and county Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) to assist the USDVA in eliminating its massive backlog of claims adjudication. Whichever cause was primary, the bottom line in both situations was to put more VSRs to work assisting veterans with obtaining their benefits.

When subvention funding in support of County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) operations was increased to \$5.6 million, many counties used this increase to add additional staff; performance metrics gathered when this funding was first authorized, and as reported to the Legislature at that time, showed a direct correlation between those new hires and increased monetary benefits. However, many counties were hesitant to hire new staff or make robust changes to their operations because the funding was a one-time appropriation for the first two years; it was only made ongoing funding in fiscal year 2015-16. That budget implication, coupled with hiring processes and claims processing, explains the lag between adding the new funding and seeing the effect on utilization rates.

But even with those new hires, California still does not field enough professional VSRs to meet the demand. Finding solutions to the historic underutilization issue has been the subject of extensive study by CalVet¹, the Bureau of State Audits² and others³. The solution comes down to whether there are enough professional VSRs available to assist veterans in filing benefit claims. In California those professional VSRs are primarily found on the CVSO staffs and there are still simply not enough VSRs available to serve the needs of California's veterans.

In 2007 CalVet recommended several strategies to correct the underutilization, including "... providing resources in support of additional full-time professional service representative staff with a focus on areas with large veteran population and lower than average benefit participation rates." While recent additional funding and resulting staff increases have provided California with the biggest boost in utilization rates since we began tracking, more needs to be done to support additional hires.

What is the end result of this understaffing? A comparison of California benefit utilization rates to Florida's and Texas' rates shows that, while we have now surpassed Florida's performance, Texas still significantly outperforms California. From the studies cited earlier we know this is because they field more VSRs, as a ratio of veterans served, than does California. Additional funding, particularly directed to fielding new, professional VSRs, is still a must to fully support California's veterans and their families.

What are the costs of not performing at best practice levels? If California were to continue improving its utilization rate until we performed similarly to Texas, it would add another \$500,000,000 annually into the state's economy — that's another step toward

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

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

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

Fiscal Year 2018 Utilization Comparisons

	Veteran Population ¹	C&P Beneficiaries ²	C&P Utilization Rate	C&P Dollars ³
California	1,629,238	456,423	28.0%	\$7,157,234,000
Florida	1,491,070	388,921	26.1%	\$6,342,478,000
Texas	1,574,021	470,600	29.9%	\$8,573,040,000
Nationwide	19,508,946	4,999,654	25.6%	\$82,776,199,000

Sources: ¹ USDVA VetPop2016 as of 9/30/2018

² USDVA FY2018 Compensation & Pension by County

³ USDVA FY2018 Geographic Distribution of Expenditures

balancing the flow of dollars to the federal government. Those new benefits are ongoing year-after-year and circulate through the local economy multiple times, bringing payback through state and local taxes. An increase in state support for CVSO operations would clearly be money well spent.

But more significantly, it would allow another 36,000 veterans to receive the benefits they earned; benefits they are being denied simply due to the failure of the state to support veteran services.

Why do we compare ourselves to Texas and Florida?

States have a number of different options for reaching out to, and providing services for, their veteran population. Some of these include use of County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), contracting with veteran service organizations, and through extensive use of state employees. Florida and Texas both use CVSOs, who work hand-in-glove with their moderately-sized state counterparts in a manner similar to California's use of CVSOs. Both Texas and Florida have large veteran populations, are geographically large, and deal with both urban and rural population densities. These types of characteristics make it logical to compare performance metrics between the states.

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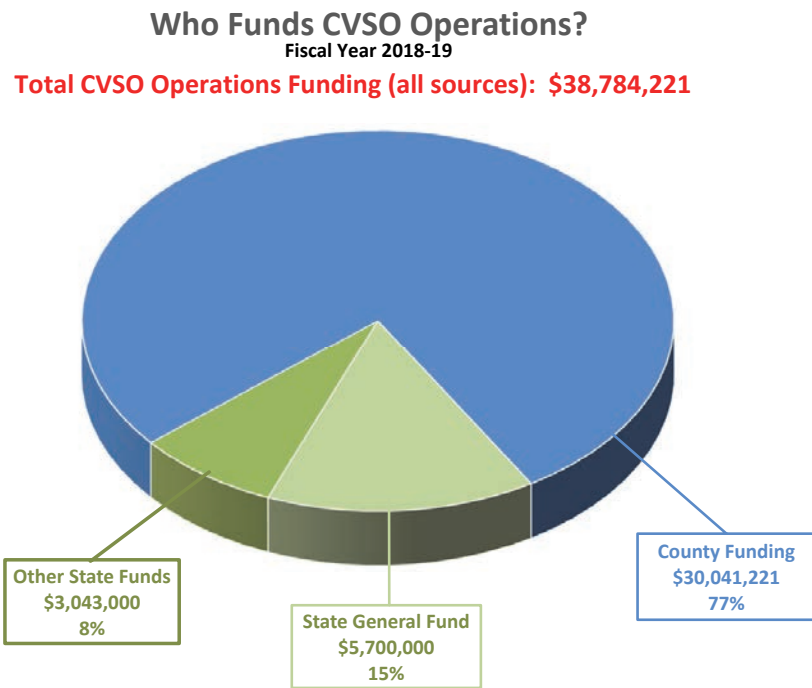
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WHO FUNDS THE CVSOs?

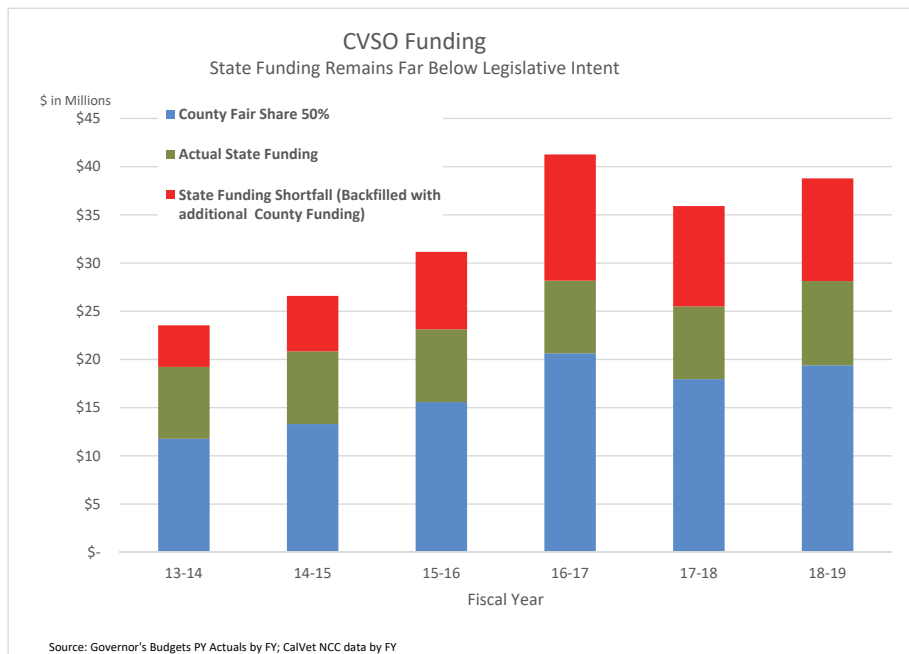
County Veteran Services Office (CVSO) operations are front funded with county funds subject to reimbursement with various appropriations from state funds, including the General Fund, Veterans Service Office Fund, Mental Health Fund and MediCal cost avoidance reimbursements. Individual counties establish the size and extent of their own CVSO operations based upon local needs and their ability to fund the program. Currently, the state's General Fund appropriation in support of CVSO operations is primarily distributed on a pro rata basis utilizing performance measures established by the California Department of Veterans Affairs. Other funding is distributed based on implementation of specific types of programs related to the intended use of these specialized funds. The chart below shows how CVSO operations were funded in fiscal year 2018-19.



Sources: CalVet NCC Data FY 18-19, 2018-19 Final Budget Summary

The state has long acknowledged that the cost of maintaining CVSOs should be shared equally between the counties and state. This history goes back to 1997 when, in order to track performance, Senate Bill 608 was enacted, requiring the California Department of Veterans Affairs to annually report the amount of monetary benefits paid to veterans by the federal government that were attributable to the assistance of CVSOs. This legislation also required the Department of Finance to consider an increase in the annual budget for support of CVSOs of up to \$5 million. In 2009, Senate Bill 419 raised this target amount to \$11 million. These dollar amounts represented approximately 50% of the total cost to operate CVSO offices statewide in the respective years and, with current general fund support for CVSOs set at \$5.6 million, have never been achieved.

In fact, as shown in the chart below, counties have had to absorb the state's failure to fund CVSO operations at the level the Legislature has explicitly deemed appropriate.



During fiscal years 1995 to 2016, the state appropriated a total of \$58.2 million from the General Fund for its share of the cost of the CVSOs. As a result of this investment, **CVSOs were able to assist local veterans in obtaining \$5.4 billion in new federal monies**. This is a return of about \$93 brought into the state's economy for every \$1 the state allocates to CVSOs. Furthermore, the \$5.4 billion only reflects the incremental monetary benefits in a given year, not the cumulative amount for ongoing benefits. The majority of these reported benefits are ongoing, and veterans continue to receive those benefits for the rest of their lives. This means the total economic impact of CVSO operations is much higher than \$5.4 billion.

It is critical that the CVSOs receive a steady stream of funding, as many of the more than 20,000 veterans returning to California annually are not aware of how to access the federal and state benefits that are available to them. Furthermore, for many veterans from prior eras needs change as they age and most are not aware that they may still be eligible for state and federal veteran benefits despite the time that has passed since their discharge from service. Therefore, there continues to be a large number of underserved veterans and dependents who are not aware of the federal and state benefits available to them in connection to their military service or how to access them.

Studies of states with similar populations and veteran service operations show that higher CVSO staffing results in larger amounts of federal moneys to veterans, both in the aggregate and to the individual veteran. Other independent studies show that by using trained professional veteran service representatives (VSRs) when applying for benefits, claimants receive higher, more comprehensive awards.

It is time to finally provide the level of funding that has long been expressed as the intent of the Legislature and to facilitate veterans getting access to the benefits they have earned.



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VETERAN STATISTICS BY COUNTY

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

The left section of the table, “Compensation & Pension Utilization Rates by County,” shows the same metric, compensation and pension utilization rate, as used when comparing California to other states.

Utilization rate is the percentage of veterans receiving compensation or pension benefits within the county for federal fiscal year 2018 as reported by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). This part of the table also shows the total compensation and pension paid, and the average amount

each beneficiary receives for those benefits within the county. These metrics reflect the efforts of all organizations that assist veterans with receiving those benefits, not just the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs). As such, this section represents the overall health of veteran service programs within that county, both public and private.

The CVSOs accounted for over \$457 million in new or increased federal veteran benefits being brought into California’s economy during fiscal year 2018-19.

The right section of the table, “New Awards Attributable to CVSOs,” provides the monetary value of new or increased monetary benefits paid to eligible veterans and their dependents by the USDVA during the state’s fiscal year 2018-19. These amounts are directly attributable to the activities and efforts of the CVSOs. **In total, the CVSOs accounted for over \$457 million in new or increased federal veteran benefits being brought into California’s economy during fiscal year 2018-19. Given that the state only provided \$5.6 million in support to CVSO operations, this represents a return on investment of \$81.75 to California’s economy for every \$1 of general fund spent.** It should be noted that “New Awards Attributable to CVSOs” reports only the new or increased benefits obtained in the fiscal year, not the cumulative benefits and, as such, is a reflection of the ongoing effort of CVSOs to assist veterans in attaining the benefits they have earned — this is truly a “what have you done for me lately” metric.

VETERAN STATISTICS BY COUNTY

Veteran Statistics By County										New Awards Attributable to CVSOs FY 2018-19		
Total Compensation & Pension (C&P) Utilization by County										Total New Awards FY 2018-19 (Note 7)	Average New Award FY 2018-19	County
County	Veteran Population (Note 1)	County Size (Note 2)	C&P Cases (Note 3)	Utilization Rate (Note 4)	C&P Dollars (Note 5)	Average C&P Award per Claimant (Note 6)						
LOS ANGELES	268,038	Large	68,182	25.4%	\$1,090,516,000	\$15,994				\$49,800,576	\$11,883	LOS ANGELES
SAN DIEGO	240,925	Large	92,398	38.4%	\$1,230,124,000	\$13,313				\$26,237,188	\$11,304	SAN DIEGO
RIVERSIDE	126,412	Large	33,791	26.7%	\$683,021,000	\$20,213				\$29,849,797	\$9,688	RIVERSIDE
ORANGE	104,949	Large	26,055	24.8%	\$376,354,000	\$14,445				\$17,030,262	\$10,532	ORANGE
SAN BERNARDINO	98,126	Large	27,287	27.8%	\$465,698,000	\$17,067				\$47,708,948	\$8,717	SAN BERNARDINO
SACRAMENTO	81,180	Large	21,196	26.1%	\$351,834,000	\$16,599				\$5,075,096	\$11,130	SACRAMENTO
SANTA CLARA	50,570	Medium	11,340	22.4%	\$159,403,000	\$14,057				\$11,488,826	\$10,788	SANTA CLARA
ALAMEDA	49,011	Medium	11,955	24.4%	\$167,429,000	\$14,005				\$6,818,249	\$21,714	ALAMEDA
CONTRA COSTA	47,785	Medium	10,268	21.5%	\$163,281,000	\$15,902				\$19,713,757	\$11,271	CONTRA COSTA
VENTURA	38,961	Medium	9,694	24.9%	\$164,744,000	\$16,994				\$9,704,013	\$7,896	VENTURA
FRESNO	38,511	Medium	11,467	29.8%	\$178,254,000	\$15,545				\$10,777,516	\$7,277	FRESNO
KERN	38,455	Medium	11,314	29.4%	\$183,965,000	\$16,260				\$10,992,915	\$6,909	KERN
SOLANO	34,305	Medium	12,243	35.7%	\$213,347,000	\$17,426				\$24,152,742	\$10,131	SOLANO
SAN JOAQUIN	30,358	Medium	7,422	24.4%	\$133,554,000	\$17,994				\$10,587,573	\$10,566	SAN JOAQUIN
PLACER	27,064	Medium	5,638	20.8%	\$108,300,000	\$19,209				\$9,386,290	\$18,190	PLACER
STANISLAUS	23,538	Medium	5,282	22.4%	\$98,390,000	\$18,627				\$18,398,721	\$7,961	STANISLAUS
SONOMA	22,428	Medium	5,305	23.7%	\$90,474,000	\$17,054				\$12,579,919	\$8,069	SONOMA
SAN MATEO	22,224	Medium	4,590	20.7%	\$67,007,000	\$14,598				\$6,765,645	\$10,791	SAN MATEO
SAN FRANCISCO	21,695	Medium	5,652	26.1%	\$71,893,000	\$12,720				\$7,658,606	\$6,975	SAN FRANCISCO
SANTA BARBARA	20,718	Medium	5,733	27.7%	\$84,006,000	\$14,653				\$11,814,176	\$11,145	SANTA BARBARA
MONTEREY	17,699	Small	6,153	34.8%	\$96,366,000	\$15,662				\$10,541,437	\$13,463	MONTEREY
SAN LUIS OBISPO	16,312	Small	3,839	23.5%	\$64,424,000	\$16,781				\$10,018,431	\$9,959	SAN LUIS OBISPO
TULARE	15,654	Small	5,120	32.7%	\$75,586,000	\$14,763				\$5,551,759	\$5,789	TULARE
BUTTE	15,474	Small	3,614	23.4%	\$66,184,000	\$18,313				\$5,896,282	\$6,777	BUTTE
SHASTA	15,267	Small	3,955	25.9%	\$84,426,000	\$21,347				\$7,126,306	\$6,761	SHASTA
EL DORADO	13,779	Small	2,879	20.9%	\$53,106,000	\$18,446				\$3,490,062	\$7,620	EL DORADO
YUBA-SUTTER	13,280	Small	4,080	30.7%	\$65,180,000	\$15,975				\$11,792,384	\$9,434	YUBA-SUTTER
MERCED	10,636	Small	2,749	25.8%	\$41,151,000	\$14,969				\$1,720,845	\$4,040	MERCED
MARIN	10,489	Small	1,768	16.9%	\$26,464,000	\$14,968				\$3,494,801	\$22,992	MARIN
SANTA CRUZ	10,058	Small	2,234	22.2%	\$44,780,000	\$20,045				\$6,400,825	\$10,408	SANTA CRUZ
KINGS	9,809	Small	3,980	40.6%	\$42,640,000	\$10,714				\$3,698,809	\$7,427	KINGS
YOLO	8,698	Small	2,252	25.9%	\$34,142,000	\$15,161				\$2,371,353	\$7,724	YOLO
HUMBOLDT	8,394	Small	2,198	26.2%	\$41,654,000	\$18,951				\$3,599,772	\$7,659	HUMBOLDT
NAPA	8,139	Small	1,712	21.0%	\$28,444,000	\$16,614				\$4,501,884	\$14,337	NAPA
NEVADA	8,048	Small	1,755	21.8%	\$35,371,000	\$20,154				\$3,723,201	\$15,644	NEVADA

Total Compensation & Pension (C&P) Utilization by County							New Awards Attributable to CVSOs FY 2018-19		
County	Veteran Population (Note 1)	County Size (Note 2)	C&P Cases (Note 3)	Utilization Rate (Note 4)	C&P Dollars (Note 5)	Average C&P Award per Claimant (Note 6)	Total New Awards FY 2018-19 (Note 7)	Average New Award FY 2018-19	County
MADERA	7,254	Very Small	1,878	25.9%	\$34,305,000	\$18,267	\$267,352	\$3,565	MADERA
IMPERIAL	6,148	Very Small	2,055	33.4%	\$29,611,000	\$14,409	\$1,532,531	\$13,211	IMPERIAL
MENDOCINO	5,462	Very Small	1,318	24.1%	\$26,346,000	\$19,989	\$1,411,521	\$6,110	MENDOCINO
LAKE	5,288	Very Small	1,446	27.3%	\$29,707,000	\$20,544	\$6,447,341	\$8,029	LAKE
TEHAMA	4,792	Very Small	1,030	21.5%	\$17,106,000	\$16,608	\$1,839,803	\$3,297	TEHAMA
TUOLUMNE	4,554	Very Small	1,101	24.2%	\$21,130,000	\$19,192	\$3,211,383	\$8,750	TUOLUMNE
CALAVERAS	4,155	Very Small	842	20.3%	\$17,325,000	\$20,576	\$482,665	\$2,145	CALAVERAS
SISKIYOU	4,140	Very Small	901	21.8%	\$16,786,000	\$18,630	\$1,822,971	\$5,330	SISKIYOU
AMADOR	3,634	Very Small	715	19.7%	\$12,831,000	\$17,945	\$1,393,837	\$5,553	AMADOR
SAN BENITO	2,400	Very Small	636	26.5%	\$12,633,000	\$19,863	\$2,105,702	\$16,981	SAN BENITO
LASSEN	2,163	Very Small	557	25.8%	\$8,838,000	\$15,867	\$136,214	\$8,513	LASSEN
DEL NORTE	2,091	Very Small	558	26.7%	\$10,864,000	\$19,470	\$1,580,630	\$14,501	DEL NORTE
PLUMAS	1,851	Very Small	472	25.5%	\$6,996,000	\$14,822	\$743,445	\$5,427	PLUMAS
MARIPOSA	1,624	Very Small	358	22.0%	\$6,160,000	\$17,207	\$59,835	\$8,548	MARIPOSA
INYO	1,315	Very Small	314	23.9%	\$5,524,000	\$17,592	\$885,515	\$15,268	INYO
GLENN	1,302	Very Small	335	25.7%	\$5,595,000	\$16,701	\$508,034	\$17,518	GLENN
TRINITY	1,250	Very Small	260	20.8%	\$5,007,000	\$19,258	\$108,935	\$27,234	TRINITY
COLUSA	851	Very Small	183	21.5%	\$3,792,000	\$20,721	\$2,147,897	\$14,319	COLUSA
MONO	815	Very Small	165	20.2%	\$1,343,000	\$8,139	\$31,172	\$31,172	MONO
MODOC	747	Very Small	171	22.9%	\$3,136,000	\$18,339	\$609,046	\$40,603	MODOC
SIERRA	323	Very Small	47	14.6%	\$611,000	\$13,000	No CVSO		SIERRA
ALPINE	90	Very Small	10	11.1%	\$78,000	\$7,800	No CVSO		ALPINE
STATEWIDE	1,629,238		456,423	28.0%	\$7,157,236,000	\$15,681	\$457,794,795	\$9,509	STATEWIDE

Notes:

1. Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2018, published by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "VetPop 2016."
2. County size is an arbitrary designation for comparison purposes based upon veteran population with "Very Small" <= 7,500; "Small" <= 20,000; "Medium" <= 75,000; and "Large" >= 75,000.
3. The number of compensation and pension beneficiaries in the county as reported by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "FY 2018 Compensation and Pension by County." These cases are the result of all veteran service organizations or individual veterans who filed claims (i.e. they are not CVSO unique).
4. Utilization rate is the percent of veterans in the county receiving either compensation or pension benefits from the USDVA.
5. The total amount of compensation and pension benefits paid to beneficiaries in the county as reported by the USDVA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics as "FY 2018 Geographic Distribution of Expenditures." These amounts are the total amount paid by USDVA for C&P benefits to claimants with addresses in the respective county. They are the cumulative result of all veteran service organizations or individual veterans who filed claims (i.e. they are not CVSO unique).
6. The average compensation and pension award received by beneficiaries in the county.
7. These amounts are the new or increased benefits obtained by the CVSO as reported in CalVet's Annual Report to the Legislature "Monetary Benefits Attributable to the Assistance of County Veterans Service Offices" for Fiscal Year 2018-19. They do not include any awards attributable to other veteran service organizations or individual filers.

CVSOS GET VETERANS THE BENEFITS THEY EARNED AND DESERVE

County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO)s help Californian veterans and their families find and qualify for a wide variety of federal and state benefits and services — some well-known, others largely unknown — earned by their service. CVSOs spend 50 percent of their time filing claims for compensation and monetary pension benefits for veterans.

Federal Veteran Benefits

VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Tax-free disability compensation benefits help veterans struggling with wounds or diseases suffered during their service. Disability Compensation benefits also cover injuries and disease aggravated during military service and service-related conditions discovered after leaving the military. Veterans receive monthly monetary payments.

VA PENSION BENEFITS

The US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) pension benefit programs are often a lifeline for low-income veterans and their families. These income-based programs assist both veterans and their dependents. Veterans receive monthly monetary payments.

VA HEALTH CARE IN CALIFORNIA

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), America's largest integrated health care system, provides care at 10 major health care facilities and 60 outpatient clinics located in all parts of California. California's major VA Health Services facilities are located in:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| ■ San Francisco | ■ Los Angeles |
| ■ Fresno | ■ Sacramento |
| ■ Livermore | ■ Menlo Park |
| ■ Loma Linda | ■ Palo Alto |
| ■ Long Beach | ■ San Diego |

VA EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

The post-9/11 GI Bill offers up to three years of monetary educational benefits at community colleges and the CSU and UC systems. It also includes a monthly housing allowance (depending on the school's location) and stipends for books and supplies while attending college.

VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES IN CALIFORNIA

Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces. The VA's National Cemetery Administration maintains nine cemeteries in California. Cemeteries accepting new internments are:

- Bakersfield National Cemetery
- Miramar National Cemetery
- Riverside National Cemetery
- Sacramento Valley National Cemetery
- San Joaquin National Cemetery

California State Benefits and Services

CALIFORNIA VETERANS' HOMES

The State of California operates eight veterans' homes, including five assisted living facilities, which have ranked high in national surveys.

- Barstow
- Chula Vista
- Fresno
- Redding
- Yountville
- West Los Angeles
- Lancaster
- Ventura

CALVET HOME LOANS

CalVet Home Loans save veterans money and provide protection for their home and investment. CalVet Home Loans offer below-market interest rates with low or no down payment requirements. In addition, CalVet Home Loans have expanded eligibility — now, nearly any veteran wanting to buy a home in California is eligible.

CALIFORNIA VETERANS CEMETERIES

The State of California operates three veterans' cemeteries:

- California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery (Monterey)
- Northern California Veterans Cemetery (Redding)
- Yountville Veterans Home Cemetery (Yountville)

The state is also developing the Southern California Veterans Cemetery at the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro in Irvine.

CALIFORNIA JOBS FOR VETERANS

The California Transition Assistance Program informs and connects veterans of all eras to their earned federal and state benefits, as well as provides continued support and assistance as their needs change over time.

CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE

The CalVet Veterans Benefit Enhancement (VBE) Program partners with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to promote USDVA health care. CalVet VBE staff contact DHCS veteran referrals via mail, emails and phone and move veterans off of Medi-Cal onto VA Health Care.

OTHER CALIFORNIA STATE BENEFITS

The children of veterans with service-connected disabilities may apply to the state's College Fee Waiver Program. This program waives mandatory systemwide fees at campuses of the University of California, California State University system and California Community Colleges.

The CVSO also helps veterans with many other state benefits, such as business license tax and fee waivers, fishing and hunting licenses, veterans license plates, motor vehicle registration fee waivers, property tax exemptions and state park passes.

SUCCESS STORIES

Solano County — CVSO assists servicemembers prior to leaving the service at Travis Air Force Base

California has more active duty military than any other state. Since 9/11, about 30,000 men and women are discharged from the service in California each year. Many of these discharging servicemembers have served from 20 to 30 years and are retiring from active military service. As part of their out-processing, they are informed of the VA benefits they are eligible for, as well as being briefed by the CalVet Transition Assistance Team. Many of these servicemembers are immediately eligible for VA benefits upon discharge.

Realizing this, the Solano CVSO office has, since 2014, stationed a Veterans Service Representative (VSR) permanently at Travis Air Force Base. This office sees an average of 10 discharging servicemembers per day and the benefit claim success rate for claims filed is 97 percent, which has resulted in most of them getting compensation benefits, based upon physical or mental illness, from the VA upon discharge from the military. In addition, there are also 5,000 veterans who work on the base as civilian employees. Since 2014, over 5,500 servicemembers and veterans have been assisted by Solano VSRs, resulting in \$95 million of VA benefits being awarded.

Contra Costa County — Disability Pension obtained for homeless veteran

A veteran visited the Contra Costa County CVSO office seeking a form for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to qualify for the “Veteran” designation on his driver’s license. CVSOs always use a visit by a veteran as an opportunity to screen each veteran for possible eligibility for veteran benefits, so the veteran was able to learn about the Disability Pension program and asked whether his brother, a Vietnam Era veteran, would be eligible for a disability pension; his brother was living in a shipping container in his father’s backyard and recycling was his only source of income. Working through the brother, the CVSO was able to assist the veteran in completing a Disability Pension application. A subsequent full grant of VA benefits was awarded, providing the homeless veteran with a tax-free monthly VA benefit of \$1,127 per month. The veteran has used his veterans benefit to obtain housing.



Los Angeles County — Helping homeless veteran get housed

A former Army Reservist was chronically homeless and living in her truck in Hollywood. The Los Angeles County Veterans Service Officer’s (CVSO’s) staff encountered her at an LGBTQ “Stand Down” event (see “Stand Down” article on pg. 17). The veteran had been told she could not receive any VA benefits because she did not meet the definition of a veteran, as her active duty status was for training. A Veterans Service Representative (VSR) interviewed her and filed a claim for compensation for her right shoulder dislocation — which had occurred during

training — and facilitated transportation to and from the VA's compensation and pension exam. With assistance from the LA County Department of Mental Health's Veteran and Loved Ones Recovery (VALOR) program and the CVSO office, the veteran secured a hotel voucher, safe parking, and a HUD-VASH (US Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) voucher, along with a VA disability rating of 20 percent for her service connected injury. She is no longer homeless.

Stand Downs: Supplies and Services for homeless veterans

Stand Downs are typically one-to three-day events providing supplies and services to homeless veterans, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings and VA Social Security benefits counseling. Veterans can also receive referrals to other assistance such as health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment and mental health counseling. Additionally, there are collaborative events coordinated between local VA Medical Centers, local government agencies, and community-based homeless service providers. To see if there is a Stand Down in your area, contact your County Veterans Service Officer (Directory at back of this Annual Report) or go to this VA website for a list of events: <https://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp>.

Sacramento County — Repatriated Vietnam veteran receives assistance from CVSO office

A Vietnam veteran returned to the US because of health issues. The veteran had no income, no place to live and became a ward of the county, which connected him to general services and Medi-Cal. During the interview, it was discovered he was an Army Vietnam veteran, whereupon he was taken to the Sacramento CVSO office. The veteran had none of his military records, so the CVSO ordered them. The CVSO also submitted a request to the VA Hospital for health care benefits. Unfortunately, 5 days later, the veteran suffered a heart attack and underwent surgery. The CVSO went to the hospital and retrieved the medical records related to his heart attack. The CVSO then filed a disability claim for presumptive Agent Orange conditions and accompanied the veteran to his VA evaluations. Within six

months, the veteran was rated 100 percent disabled by the VA and he now receives his health care at the Mather VA Hospital and a 100 percent disability compensation for the rest of his life.



Stanislaus County — CVSO helps justice-involved homeless veteran get benefits

The Stanislaus CVSO works closely with the Modesto Police Department and the Modesto Outdoor Emergency Shelter to help homeless veterans connect to VA benefits and other community resources. Through these efforts, the office came into contact with an Army veteran who had just been released from prison. The veteran was dealing

with substance use, homelessness and lack of income. Over the course of a year, the Veterans Service Representative (VSR) worked to file a VA claim and connected the veteran with a local shelter and recovery program. The VSR reconnected with the veteran at a recent Stand Down event for homeless veterans and was humbled by the veterans words, “Because of meeting with you I just want to let you know that I was able to get my disability claim approved and now I’m getting 100 percent disability. I got a home now and I’ve been clean this entire time because of the rehab facility you referred me to. If I didn’t meet you I wouldn’t have known of any of these resources available to me.” This is the power of CVSOs.

Sacramento County — Veteran homeless for 45 years gets health care and place to live

For 45 years, a homeless former Marine Vietnam veteran had lived along the Sacramento River struggling with PTSD and liver disease. A case manager for Volunteers of America (VOA) found him and took him to the VA hospital. Once he left the hospital, the VOA rep attempted to obtain assistance for him from the VA. However, the claim was extremely complex, so she utilized a partnership she had developed with the Sacramento CVSO. A Veterans Service Representative (VSR) went to work filing a claim for VA disability compensation for the veteran and in three months had obtained a 100% disability rating for the Marine. This veteran is no longer homeless, is receiving disability compensation and now has access to VA health care for the rest of his life.



Riverside County — CVSO collaborates with other agencies to house homeless veteran

The Riverside CVSO was notified by its local Congressional office about a homeless Air Force veteran. The Senior Veterans Service Representative (VSR) met with the veteran, who mentioned that he had an active application for Section 8 Housing. The VSR contacted the county housing authority to help expedite the application’s processing. The VSR, in coordination with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency, found several housing options for the veteran. An empty apartment was found, and the team of county and community partners procured a bed, furniture, food and cooking utensils. This was a multi-department effort by the county to house a homeless veteran.

Sacramento County — National Guard Veteran’s claim finally awarded after three-year battle

An elderly veteran had experienced a horrific training accident in which C4 blew off part of his ear and lodged pieces of wood and other shrapnel in his body. After the veteran fought unsuccessfully for three years to have the VA award his claim, his daughter finally enlisted the help of seasoned Veteran Claims Representative (VCR) Michael Restivo, who took on her father’s case. Three months later the veteran was awarded 100 percent disability

by the VA and a retroactive payment of over \$100,000 dating back to 2016, when he first attempted to have the VA rate his disability. Michael's efforts have improved the quality of life for this veteran and his family beyond measure. (Sacramento County)

San Diego County — Driver's license verification leads to VA healthcare

A veteran who just needed verification of veteran status ended up getting more than he bargained for. As a Veteran Services Representative (VSR) at the National City office was assisting a walk-in veteran get verification of veteran status in order to receive the veteran designation on his California driver's license, the VSR determined that the veteran might also be eligible for a disability claim. The proper paperwork was submitted and six months later the veteran was awarded a service-connected disability rating and is now also receiving VA health care. And this all began with a simple walk-in visit.

Los Angeles County — CVSO hires veterans on the spot

During a recent Memorial Day Event, representatives of the Los Angeles County CVSO participated in a county hiring job fair — giving the CVSO an opportunity to hire veterans on the spot. Three veterans were subsequently hired under the county's Veterans Intern Program, under which they are paid county employees. As part of this program, they will be trained to become Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) and receive accreditation from the California Department of Veterans Affairs — so they can go on to help other veterans and provide the same types of support they were given.

Los Angeles County — Reaching out to veterans on college campuses

The Los Angeles CVSO, in partnership with United States Veteran Initiative (US VETS), received a grant under the provisions of California's Mental Health Services Act (Proposition



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

63) to support veterans, dependents and survivors in need of mental health care, VA benefit counseling, and claims processing on college campuses. CVSO representatives will be attached to the team of mental health professionals and case managers, where they will coordinate all veterans benefit activities.

Colusa County — Homeless veteran receives VA health care and benefits

A 75-year-old homeless veteran was dropped off at the Colusa Regional Hospital with a severe case of Basal-cell carcinoma and major infection in his nasal passage. Since he had no medical insurance, the hospital was only able to provide basic care. Adult Protective Services (APS) learned he was a Vietnam era veteran and contacted the Colusa CVSO, who interviewed the veteran and discovered he'd been living for over 20 years in a barely habitable old trailer. Working together, the CVSO and APS personnel worked with the Colusa County One-Stop to secure a one-bedroom unit for the veteran, as well as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and VA pension benefits, since he had no income. In addition, the CVSO was able to get the veteran enrolled in the VA health care system. The veteran has since been transferred to the Martinez VA Medical Center's Center for Rehabilitation and Extended Care, where he's receiving long overdue medical care. Thanks to chemotherapy treatments it appears that his cancer is in remission, and thanks to the CVSO he's finally receiving his deserved veteran benefits.

Napa County — Nine chronically homeless veterans connected to VA benefits and county services

Most mornings, one of the Veteran Service Representatives (VSR) at the Napa County CVSO arrives to work early and walks along the river where homeless veterans tend to stay. They have come to trust this VSR and to date, he's helped nine homeless veterans obtain benefits previously denied to them. The VSR interviewed each veteran and filed new claims for service-connected disabilities; all nine were awarded VA disability ratings ranging from 10-100% and all are currently in housing. Moreover, three of the veterans had been estranged from college-aged dependents. The dependents applied for and were granted the College Fee Waiver, which helped pave the way for family reconciliation. The

office participates in the Napa Continuum of Care (NCOC), a local consortium providing services to the homeless population, where 37 homeless individuals were identified as veterans. Utilizing this collaborative tool, the VSR was able to interview each homeless veteran and file claims accordingly. The NCOC has subsequently directed other homeless veterans to the CVSO with the ultimate goal of ending veteran homelessness in Napa County.



San Diego County — Outreach to veterans in area libraries

Among its methods of outreach to veterans, the San Diego CVSO rotates a Veterans

Service Representative (VSR) among the county's various libraries. A VSR assigned to the Chula Vista library was approached by a woman asking about her husband's veterans' benefits; he had served in the Navy, but never learned anything about his VA benefits since leaving the service in 1988. The VSR briefed her on all benefits and scheduled an appointment for her husband, at which time the VSR and veteran determined that a claim could be filed. Ultimately, the veteran's VA disability claim was approved, and he began receiving compensation for his service-connected disability. The VSR also helped the veteran utilize the CalVet college fee waiver program for his daughter, which waives tuition and fees at any California state college or UC. This family had been struggling financially and these benefits made a big difference in their lives.

Recent Court Victories for California Veterans After VA Denied Claims

Prior to 2017, if the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) denied a veteran's disability compensation claim at a VA Regional Office and at VA's Board of Veterans Appeals (Board), California CVSOs were unable to assist the veteran further with an appeal to the US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court) in Washington DC.

However, this all changed starting in 2017, when the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) and the national law firm of Bergmann and Moore (B&M) reached an agreement giving veterans the opportunity to appeal a Board decision to the court, with B&M providing representation at no cost to veterans or the CACVSO.

When a VA Regional Office and then the VA's Board denies a veteran's claim, the veteran's CACVSO advocate sends the Board decision to B&M for a free review. Assuming the veteran's claim appeal has merit, B&M then provides no-cost representation before the court.



The results for California veterans and their families have been phenomenal; during 2019, B&M prevailed on 20 California appeals, and another 20 await court decisions.

Here are just three examples that demonstrate how the CACVSO-B&M relationship adds significant value to CVSOs and California's veterans:

Veteran #1

Served in the US Air Force at U-Tapao Air Force Base, Thailand, during the Vietnam War.

Claim: In August 2018, the BVA denied the veteran's claim for diabetes and prostate cancer associated with exposure to herbicides (Agent Orange) based on his service in Thailand.

Results: B&M identified an error in the BVA's denial of the claim and convinced the court to return the Veteran's claim back to the BVA to reconsider the nature of the veteran's duties

while in Thailand. In September 2019, as a result of the court's remand, the BVA reviewed the veteran's claim again. This time, the VA conceded that the veteran was exposed to herbicides at U-Tapao Air Force Base and granted service connection on a presumptive disease basis for diabetes and prostate cancer.

Veteran #2

Served in the US Navy during the Korean War and died in September 2010.

Claim: In June 2018, the BVA denied his widow's claim for survivor benefits for the veteran's lung cancer based on his exposure to asbestos while serving as a firefighter and machinist.

Results: In December 2018, B&M identified errors in the BVA's denial and persuaded the VA to return the widow's claim to the BVA to properly answer whether the veteran's exposure to asbestos while in the Navy contributed substantially to his death. In July 2019, the BVA conceded the veteran's death was linked to his asbestos exposure and granted the widow survivor benefits.

Veteran #3

Served in the US Marine Corps in Vietnam, where he earned a Purple Heart Medal and was exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides.

Claim: In January 2017, the BVA denied his claim for service connection for a heart condition.

Results: B&M identified errors in the BVA's denial and successfully argued that the court should return the veteran's claim to the BVA in order to obtain and review all medical records related to his heart condition. In the ensuing decision in February 2018, the BVA obtained the veteran's complete medical records, which showed a diagnosis of coronary artery disease. The BVA then granted the veteran service connection on a presumptive basis.

"These are solid claim victories for California veterans and families, and we are honored to assist CACVSO and County Veterans Service Officers with no-cost representation before the Court," said Paul Sullivan, Bergmann & Moore's Director of Veteran Outreach and a former CalVet Deputy Secretary.



THE CALIFORNIA STATE COMMANDERS VETERANS COUNCIL AND THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS:

WORKING TOGETHER ON BEHALF OF CALIFORNIA'S VETERANS FOR OVER 50 YEARS



ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA STATE COMMANDERS VETERANS COUNCIL:

Founded in 1966, the California State Commanders Veterans Council promotes the rights, benefits, and opportunities of veterans in the State of California.

The Council conducts advocacy efforts at the state Legislature, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, the CalVet board, the Dept. of General Services, and other state and federal entities as well as businesses concerned with veterans.

As per California Military and Veterans Code Section 73.4; The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs is directed to confer with the California State Commanders Veterans Council twice yearly on issues affecting California veterans.

2020 CSCVC officers:

Chair - Fred Romero, American GI Forum of California

Vice Chair - Jim Anderson, Military Order of the Purple Heart

Secretary - Chuck Jamison, Scottish American Military Society

Treasurer - Beverly Houghton, Reserve Organization of America

Legislative Officer - Jim Luby, National Guard Association of California

MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE COMMANDERS VETERANS COUNCIL:



Paralyzed Veterans of America
California Chapter



National Guard Association
of California



AROUND THE CAPITOL



CVSOs in State Capitol preparing to brief legislators and staff on how CVSOs help veterans and their families. L to R: Andrew Norwood, Tehama CVSO; Dennis Whitt, Butte CVSO; John Zepeda, Butte VSR

CVSOs in the Assembly Chambers between meeting with state legislators. L to R: Rhonda Murphy, Santa Barbara CVSO; Yvette Mason, San Luis Obispo VSR; Kerri Garrison; Santa Barbara VSR; Sandra Gould, San Luis Obispo VSR



Los Angeles area CVSOs brief Senator Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera), Chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. L to R: Eddie Falcon, Orange CVSO; George Dixon, Los Angeles VSR; Ruth Wong, Los Angeles CVSO; Senator Archuleta



Christopher Duarte (L) and Dennis Campos (C) of the Los Angeles CVSO brief the Assembly Speaker's veterans' consultant, George Wiley, on the CVSO's new Annual Report.



CVSOs receive legislative update from lobbyists Bob Reeb and Seth Reeb prior to briefing legislators and staff on CACVSO Annual Report highlighting importance of CVSOs to California's 1.7 million veterans.

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The California Association of County Veterans Service Offices has selected State Senator Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo) as the recipient of the Motomu Nakasako Legislator of the Year award for 2020.

The Motomu Nakasako Award is named after “Mote” Nakasako, a Los Angeles County Veterans Service Officer who was actively involved in legislation to improve the lives of veterans at the local, state, and federal levels.

Senator Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo)



Senator Hill was elected to the California State Senate in 2012 to represent the 13th Senate District, which includes portions of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Prior to the Senate, Hill served in the State Assembly from 2008-2012. He has also served as the mayor of the city of San Mateo, and as a member of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. In the Senate, he is the chair of the Senate’s Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee and the Subcommittee on Gas, Electric and Transportation Safety. Senator Hill served in the Army component of the

California National Guard from 1966 to 1972, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant.

In 2018, Hill introduced SB 1427 to address veteran and military housing discrimination via the Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) program. SB 1427 was subsequently vetoed by the previous governor. Undaunted, Hill introduced the bill concept again in 2019 as SB 222, which included language that addressed the concerns raised by the previous governor. After much hard work by the Senator and his staff, the bill was signed into law by Governor Newsom in October 2019.

HUD-VASH is complemented by a continuum of VA programs that use modern tools and technology to identify the most vulnerable veterans and rapidly connect them to the appropriate interventions to become and remain stably housed. SB 222 underscored that housing discrimination on account of military or veteran status is unlawful in California by explicitly stating so within the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). In addition, SB 222 defined a VASH voucher as a source of income for purposes of FEHA. This type of legislation helps CVSOS move homeless veterans off the streets and into stable housing for them and their families.

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

2018 — Senator Hannah Beth Jackson and Assemblyman Marc Levine
 2017 — Senator Josh Newman and Assemblyman Rocky Chávez
 2016 — Senator Jim Nielsen and Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin
 2015 — Senator Richard Roth and Assemblyman Jim Frazier
 2014 — Senator Ben Hueso and Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva

Recipients of CACVSO Lifetime Achievement Award

2015 — Assemblywoman Toni Atkins
 2011 — Assemblyman Paul Cook

CACVSO LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Since the 1980s, the CACVSO has been active at the State Capitol, advocating on behalf of California veterans, military members, and their families. Since 2018, Reeb Government Relations (RGR) has represented the CACVSO at the Capitol. RGR lobbyists Seth Reeb and Dana Nichol transferred to RGR in 2018 after having previously worked for Pete Conaty and Associates, the former legislative advocate for the CACVSO for 16 years. This transition provided the Association with 19 years of institutional knowledge and familiarization with the needs of veterans and those who serve them.



About Bob Reeb/Reeb Government Relations

Reeb Government Relations was established in January 2005 by Bob Reeb to assist clients with policy analysis, issues management and California legislative and regulatory advocacy in the field of water resources policy and management, including flood protection. Bob possesses over three decades of experience in California state and local government and has served as the State Legislative Director for the Association of California Water Agencies, Vice President for two municipal securities firms, General Manager for the El Dorado County Water Agency, Committee Consultant in the State Legislature, and staff member for an Assemblyman. Reeb Government Relations now also represents the veterans and military associations formerly represented by long-time veterans advocate Pete Conaty.



About Seth Reeb

Seth enlisted in the US Army in 2004 as an infantryman with the 10th Mountain Division in Fort Polk, Louisiana. He is an Iraq and Afghanistan combat veteran. He served in Afghanistan in 2006 and Iraq in 2007-2008. He is the recipient of the Combat Infantry Badge, Expert Infantry Badge, and Army Commendation Medal for Valor. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant prior to leaving the Army in 2009. Prior to Reeb Government Relations, Seth was mentored by Pete Conaty in 2017, becoming familiar with veterans service organizations and CACVSO leaders and members and learning about the issues that confront them. Seth assumed the lead role representing veterans in 2018. Pete Conaty remains a valued advisor to the firm on veterans issues.



About Dana Nichol

Dana Nichol transferred to Reeb Government Relations in 2018 to assist with veterans and military issues. Dana worked for former veterans lobbyist Pete Conaty since 2004 and has worked on all aspects of legislative and budget issues pertaining to the CVSOs and veterans service organizations, as well as business, water, non-profit museums, local government, and recreational land-use clients.



Annual Report Editor/Technical Advisor Pete Conaty

After a 21-year military career and ten years working for the Legislature, Pete established the advocacy firm of Pete Conaty and Associates in 1996. Over the last 31 years, he has worked on over 1,300 veterans and military legislative bills at the State Capitol. In 2010 and 2015, he was awarded the CalVet Secretary's Award for his "invaluable contributions to California veterans." He has retired from active lobbying, however he remains a valued advisor to the firm on veterans issues.

CACVSO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



About Tom Splitgerber

Tom Splitgerber is the CACVSO Executive Director. Dr. Splitgerber served in the United States Navy for 30 years. He then served as a San Diego County Veterans Service Officer for 11 years. Tom served as President of the CACVSO for two years, and President of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers for two years.



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



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CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2020

Additional Local Assistance Funding For CVSOs

In 2020, the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) will be seeking to raise the state's Local Assistance to counties for CVSO offices from the current \$5.6 million funding level to \$11 million. This brings the state in line with paying half of the funding needed to operate CVSOs throughout the state as per SB 419 of 2009. Currently, the counties pick up the majority of the funding. As part of this legislative effort, the CACVSO will continue to educate the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the public on the importance and value of County Veterans Service Officers.



Other Legislative Priorities, 2020 Legislative Session

The CACVSO is realigning their priorities to focus on getting homeless veterans off the street and into housing, including transitional and permanent supportive housing. CACVSO will work with CalVet to record and track all homeless contact, outreach activities and successful entry into a housing environment. Here are our key issues:

- Support legislation that would require an individual, who is assisting a veteran with filing a claim for benefits, to notify that veteran if they are not a VA-accredited representative and make it a criminal offense to intentionally misdirect or mislead a veteran, or anyone acting on a veteran's behalf, concerning benefits or entitlements for their own monetary gain.
- Support legislation that would grant the license plate fee waiver to all veterans rated at 100 percent either rating or through Individual Unemployability and separate the disabled placard and make it an option for veterans with mobility impairment.
- Support legislation that would restore the veterans-only specialized license plate, so that there would be two plates available for sale — "Veteran" and "Honoring Veterans."
- Support the legislative priorities of the state veterans service organizations that are in-line with our own legislative priorities.
- Support legislation that would promote state income tax on military retirement pay for military retirees.
- Support legislation that would reform the current system of property tax relief for disabled veterans by raising the current state dollar limitation on property tax relief for disabled veterans.
- Support legislation that would promote the awarding of state grants through CalVet to veterans service organizations and veterans service agencies that provide claims assistance and outreach to California veterans.
- Support legislation that would require that California Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises (DVBEs) hire more disabled and non-disabled veterans. Currently, there is no requirement for DVBEs to hire veterans.

- Support legislation that would continue to encourage expansion of veterans treatment courts to more counties by providing state funding of veterans' treatment courts in California.
- Support legislation that would reduce property tax assessment on veterans service organizations' posts and chapters.
- Support legislation that would expand laws to prevent dishonest vendors and businesses that prey on or scam veterans and active duty military personnel by criminalizing their activities.
- Support legislation that would create a Governor's Memorial Certificate similar to the Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC). Include information directing survivors to the CVSOs. (PMC is a signed certificate by the President to the family of deceased veterans).
- Support legislation that would create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CalVet Veterans Homes and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) to provide volunteers to the state veterans homes similar to the federal Veterans Administration Volunteer Service (VAVS) program.

CACVSO Federal Legislative Priorities, 2020

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

You are an inspiration

You are quick to reach out to those in need. You selflessly give of your time. You make a positive difference in our community one kind act at a time. For your inspired example, we salute you.

Union Bank® is proud to support The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

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Richard Chacon
Director
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Directory of County Veterans Service Officers

Find your local CVSO by dialing (844) 737-8838 • cacvso.org

ALAMEDA COUNTY | **Anthony Marchante**
6955 Foothill Blvd., Suite 300 | Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 577-1926

AMADOR COUNTY | **Terry Sanders**
11401 American Legion Way (physical address)
810 Court Street (mailing address)
Jackson, CA 95642
(209) 223-6476

BUTTE COUNTY | **Dennis Whitt**
765 East Avenue | Chico, CA 95926
(530) 891-2759

CALAVERAS COUNTY | **Chele Beretz**
Jenny Lind Veteran Memorial Building
300 Daphne Street | Valley Springs, CA 95252
(209) 754-6910

COLUSA COUNTY | **Don Parsons**
251 East Webster Street | Colusa, CA 95932
(530) 458-0388

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY | **Nathan Johnson**
10 Douglas Drive, #100 | Martinez, CA 94553-4078
(925) 313-1481

DEL NORTE COUNTY | **Aaron Goodwin**
810 "H" Street | Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 464-2154

EL DORADO COUNTY | **Lance Poinsett**
130 Placerville Drive, Suite B | Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5892

FRESNO COUNTY | **David Rose**
1320 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 105 | Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 600-5436

GLENN COUNTY | **Brandon Thompson**
525 West Sycamore Street, Suite A5 | Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-6524

HUMBOLDT COUNTY | **Rena Maveety**
1105 6th Street, #F | Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 445-7611

IMPERIAL COUNTY | **Frederico Garcia**
217 South 10th Street | El Centro, CA 92243
(442) 265-3200

INYO/MONO COUNTIES | **Jeff Hollowell**
County Services Building
207 West South Street | Bishop, CA 93514
(760) 873-7850

KERN COUNTY | **Joshua Dhanens**
1120 Golden State Avenue | Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 868-7300

KINGS COUNTY | **Scott Holwell**
County Government Center, Law Bldg., #4
1400 West Lacey Blvd. | Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 852-2669

LAKE COUNTY | **Saul Sanabria**
255 North Forbes Street | Lakeport, CA 95453
(707) 263-2384

LASSEN COUNTY | **Chris Mancebo**
Veterans Memorial Building
1205 Main Street, #101 | Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8192

LOS ANGELES COUNTY | **Ruth A. Wong**
Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
1816 South Figueroa Street | Los Angeles, CA 90015
(213) 744-4825

MADERA COUNTY | **Jose Trujillo**
200 West Fourth Street | Madera, CA 93637
(559) 675-7766

MARIN COUNTY | **Sean Stephens**
10 North San Pedro Road, Suite 1010 | San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 473-6193

MARIPOSA COUNTY | Bob Johns

5300 Highway 49 North (physical address)
 PO Box 774 (mailing address)
 Mariposa, CA 95338
 (209) 966-3696

MENDOCINO COUNTY | Ulyses Lopez

405 Observatory Avenue (physical address)
 PO Box 839 (mailing address)
 Ukiah, CA 95482
 (707) 463-4226

MERCED COUNTY | John Cox (Acting)

3376 North Hwy 59, Suite D (physical address)
 PO Box 112 (mailing address)
 Merced, CA 95341
 (209) 385-7588

MODOC COUNTY | Harry Hitchings

202 West 4th Street, Suite F | Alturas, CA 96101
 (530) 233-6209

MONO COUNTY

(see Inyo/Mono Counties)

MONTEREY COUNTY | Jason Cameron

1200 Aguajito Road, Suite 003 | Monterey, CA 93940
 (831) 647-7613

NAPA COUNTY | Dell Pratt

650 Imperial Way, Suite 202 | Napa, CA 94559
 (707) 253-4558

NEVADA COUNTY | David O. West II

988 McCourtney Road | Grass Valley, CA 95949
 (530) 265-1446

ORANGE COUNTY | Eddie Falcon

County Operations Center
 1300 South Grand Avenue, Bldg. B | Santa Ana, CA 92705
 (714) 480-6555

PLACER COUNTY | Derrick Oliveira

1000 Sunset Blvd., Suite 115 | Rocklin, CA 95765
 (916) 780-3290

PLUMAS/SIERRA COUNTIES | Shawn Bondon

Health & Human Services Office
 270 County Hospital Road, Suite 206 | Quincy, CA 95971
 (530) 283-6275

RIVERSIDE COUNTY | Grant Gautsche

4360 Orange Street | Riverside, CA 92501
 (951) 955-3060

SACRAMENTO COUNTY | Rochelle Arnold

2007 19th Street | Sacramento, CA 95818
 (916) 874-6811

SAN BENITO COUNTY | Jason Cameron

649 San Benito Street | Hollister, CA 95023
 (831) 647-7613

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY | Frank Guevara

222 W. Hospitality Lane, 3rd Floor | San Bernardino, CA 92415
 (909) 382-3290

SAN DIEGO COUNTY | Wil Quintong

OMVA Headquarters
 5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310 | San Diego, CA 92123
 (858) 694-3222

SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY | Elvira A. Flaviano (Acting)

2 Gough Street | San Francisco, CA 94103
 (415) 934-4200

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY | Virginia Wimmer

105 South San Joaquin Street | Stockton, CA 95202
 (209) 468-2916

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY | Hans Poschman (Interim)

801 Grand Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
 (805) 781-5766

SAN MATEO COUNTY | Ed Kiryczun

550 Quarry Road | San Carlos, CA 94070
 (650) 802-6598

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY | Rhonda Murphy

624 West Foster Road, Suite A | Santa Maria, CA 93455
 (805) 346-7160

SANTA CLARA COUNTY | Vacant

68 North Winchester Blvd. | Santa Clara, CA 95050
(408) 918-4980

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY | Dean Kaufman

842 Front Street | Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-7276

SIERRA COUNTY

(see Plumas/Sierra Counties)

SHASTA COUNTY | Celestina Traver

1855 Shasta Street | Redding, CA 96001
(530) 225-5616

SISKIYOU COUNTY | Tom Jackson

105 East Oberlin Road | Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 842-8010

SOLANO COUNTY | Ted Puntillo

675 Texas Street, Suite 4700 | Fairfield, CA 94533-6340
(707) 784-6590

SONOMA COUNTY | Mark G. Orlando

3725 Westwind Blvd., Suite 100 | Santa Rosa, CA 95402
(707) 565-5960

STANISLAUS COUNTY | Ryan Kegley

121 Downey Avenue, Suite 102 | Modesto, CA 95354
(209) 558-7380

SUTTER COUNTY

(see Yuba/Sutter Counties)

TEHAMA COUNTY | Andrew Norwood

444 Oak Street, Room C | Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 529-3664

TRINITY COUNTY | Jennifer Dobbs

100 Memorial Drive (physical address)
PO Box 31 (mailing address)
Weaverville, CA 96093
(530) 623-3975

TULARE COUNTY | Ken Cruickshank

3348 West Mineral King Avenue | Visalia, CA 93291
(559) 713-2880

TUOLUMNE COUNTY | Debora Kay Esque

105 Hospital Road | Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 533-6280

VENTURA COUNTY | Mike McManus

5740 Ralston Street, #304 | Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 477-5155

YOLO COUNTY | Salvatore Torres

120 West Main Street, Suite A | Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 406-4850

YUBA/SUTTER COUNTIES | Marvin King, Jr.

5730 Packard Avenue, Suite 300 | Marysville, CA 95901
(530) 749-6710

CACVSO OFFICERS 2019

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CalTAP

CALIFORNIA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



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A close-up, artistic photograph of the American flag. The focus is on the texture of the fabric, showing the stars and stripes. The colors are deep blue, red, and white. The stars are white with a slight shadow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The stripes are slightly wavy, suggesting the flag is draped or blowing in the wind. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the fabric.

For your sacrifice and devotion, thank you.
We will never forget.

MENALLY TEMPLE ASSOCIATES, INC.

HOT TOPICS

California Veterans' Treatment Courts and Alternative Justice Programs

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

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

Library Veteran Resource Centers

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

CACVSO Mentor Program

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

Veteran Driver License and ID Available

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

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

1

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

3

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

Note: tests may be required.

2

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

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

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



www.calvet.ca.gov

CAL VET
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OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



~~\$63,416,064~~ ^{\$179,894,566} IN NEW VETERANS MONETARY PAYMENTS

California was the second to the last state in the nation to allow a veterans' designation on the driver's license. With the passage of AB 935 by Assemblymember Jim Frazier in 2014, CalVet, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and CACVSO worked together to create a form to be used to verify a veteran's status to the DMV. This eliminated the need for DMV to check various types of identification for veterans.

More importantly, the veteran was required to visit the County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) to receive the form for the DMV. While verifying the veteran's status, the CVSO also review the veteran's military records to see if they are eligible for any federal VA benefits.

Because of the complexity of the VA Benefits System and ongoing changes to the law, a large number of California veterans are unaware that they are eligible for these federal VA benefits, including monthly, monetary payments.

The Results Have Been Astounding

From October 2015 to December 31, 2019, veterans have received ~~\$63,416,064~~ ^{\$179,894,566} in new monetary payments.

The majority of that money is annualized monthly payments made directly to approximately 20,000 California veterans; these monthly payments continue as long as the veteran lives. After the veteran passes, the spouse may be able to continue to receive benefits.

These payments to California's veterans will continue to increase as more veterans apply for the veterans' designation on their driver's licenses.

Thank you Assemblymember Jim Frazier.



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ENERGY
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Californians for Energy Independence is a coalition that supports state and local policies that allow for continued domestic energy production and opposes those policies – such as oil taxes and energy bans – that would hinder production and increase reliance on foreign oil.

EnergyIndependenceCA.com



RECEIVE VETERAN BENEFIT INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO YOUR NEEDS!

Register with myCalVet today!

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

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV