



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEWS

Since its establishment in 1945, the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) has remained focused on aiding and assisting "Hoosier" veterans, and qualified family members or survivors, who are eligible for benefits or advantages provided by Indiana and the U.S. government. The IDVA staff coordinates and participates in direct outreach events for veterans and their families across the state on a daily basis. Thanks in part to key partnerships with the Indiana National Guard and many other veteran organizations, IDVA has seen a dramatic increase in as little as three years in the number of veterans placed in jobs, state benefits recipients, and events taking place in the State.

In our documented 409,836 veterans in the State of Indiana, it is the mission of IDVA to ensure that these veterans, in both suburban and rural areas, are sought out and encouraged to participate in events and resources that are catered to them.

State Benefits

Since the purchase of our claims management system, VetraSpec, in 2014, there have been 63,225 veteran files added to this secure, web based, claims management system. We also have 114 VetraSpec accounts for the County Veteran Service Officers and their staff who are utilizing this system with their own secure account access. Additionally, we are having success with filing claims with this system in a completely electronic format directly into the Veteran Benefits Management System (VBMS) through a collaboration with the American Legion.

According to the FY2017 Geographic Distribution of Expenditures (GDY) Report, Indiana veterans received over \$1.3 billion in Compensation and Pension benefits. This is over a \$254 million increase from FY2013. Even though the overall veteran population decreased by approximately 80,000 veterans since FY2013, the number of veterans receiving Compensation and Pension benefits has increased by over 14,000 for a total of over 93,000 veterans receiving those benefits. Total expenditures were calculated at \$3 billion for FY2017, an increase from the \$2.5 billion spent throughout FY2013.

Monetary benefits received by Indiana veterans is increasing year after year and more and more veterans are being assisted locally in their counties of residence by professional, dedicated, well-trained service officers. We will continue to seek innovative ways to ensure we continue to have the best service and support possible for our CVSOs who provide assistance.

 CVSO Accreditation — 98%



IDVA is responsible for the coordination of training and certification of each County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) in Indiana. We are now recognized by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs Office of General Counsel as an accredited service organization, and can accredit our own County and State Service Officers. This assists us in enabling CVSOs to meet the state mandate of accreditation within one year of their date of hire. Prior to 2012 approximately eight CVSOs were accredited through the Office of General Counsel (OGC). Today, an astounding 98% of the CVSOs are accredited. The remaining 2% of the counties either have new service officers who are being trained for accreditation or county officials are working to make the CVSO position at least part time and provide funding for an office and equipment.

After funding for District Service Officers (DSO) was approved in 2017, IDVA has hired and trained six staff members to fulfill their mission of assisting the 92 CVSOs located throughout the state. Along with this vital role, they provide mentorship to their CVSOs and attend veteran outreach events in their areas to encourage veterans to see if they are eligible for benefits and provide resources specific to their area.

These District Service Officers are IDVA employees who live and work in their assigned districts and support and assist anywhere from 14-17 individual counties. They are all accredited through the OGC and all have experience in filing claims through the Federal VA.

This year's CVSO training conference was held at Camp Atterbury (Edinburgh) from July 9-11. Senator Todd Young sat down with the District Service Officers (DSO) to hear their concerns about veterans access to care and benefits. He afterwards addressed the CVSOs and spoke with them about any of their individual concerns as well.



Military Family Relief Fund

The Military Family Relief Fund is an emergency grant which has been established and utilized by families in need of food, housing, utilities, medical services, transportation and other essential family support expenses. Each approved grant allows for a veteran to receive up to \$2,500 to have their approved requested needs met.

Our reporting shows that FY17 was our highest year to grant 1,717 veterans over \$2.9 million. For FY18, MFRF granted \$2.2 million to just over 1.4k veterans. Our FY19 currently shows 625 veterans have received \$792,355. Based on prior years, it is estimated that we will reach 1.3k veterans for the FY19 count and grant another \$2 million.

Legislation allows ALL VETERANS who were honorably discharged and served 12 months of active duty time during a national conflict or war time period to apply for the grant. It was previously exclusive to those who served Post 9/11.

Funding comes from BMV license plate sales and private donations. IDVA has recently added a donation page on our state site, enabling the public to contribute through a secure location.

Women Veterans' Program

The Women Veteran's Program (WINVet-Women of Indiana Who are Veterans) is dedicated to empowering women veterans to attain the utmost quality of life by providing reliable resources, delivering quality community outreach, cultivating vast networking, and identifying distinguished allegiance to community and service. Women veterans continue to increase in numbers in approximately 65% of Indiana counties. IDVA fully recognizes these women veterans throughout the state and provides state benefits equal to all veterans.

The WINVet Program participates in a multitude of outreach events throughout the state incorporating partnerships with many services to educate women veterans about benefits, filing claims, and the services which are available to them.

The IDVA Women's Program Director is also the President of the National Association of State Women Coordinators. The association is a leading advocate for women veterans by working closely with a variety of veteran services and provides assistance to better serve our nation's women veterans.

The Women Veterans' Conference held self-defense classes, massage and hair styling, vendors providing information directly for women veterans, and giveaways. Specialty doctors, including OB-GYNs from Indianapolis' Roudebush VA Medical Center, spoke about women's issues and concerns that can be addressed when they schedule an appointment.

Highlights

- Empowered Indiana's 36,245 women veterans with reliable resources, quality outreach, vast network opportunities, and honoring distinguished community service.
- Assisted with preventing homeless situations and receiving MST (Military Sexual Trauma) counseling through the VA.
- Partnered with veteran community services, service organizations, and universities that supported ideal assistance to meet the unique needs to women veterans throughout the state.
- President of the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators.



Employment & IDVA's How & Why to Hire A Veteran Summit

The employment team is focused on navigating a veteran or their family member toward a career that they are interested in pursuing. The trained staff reviews each resume that is submitted to see if and what changes would need to be made prior to applying for work. Regardless if the resume is perfect, or needs to be adjusted, every person who registers through the database used for employment is contacted and works with a case manager until they find stability.

To date there are 67 active cases and 145 employment successes. In past years, the numbers have been roughly the same with veterans employment numbers being 134 in 2017 and 136 in 2016. The success rate of the employment team's efforts have saved the state \$243,360.

IDVA also has a partnership with DWD, that allows a LVER (Local Veterans' Employment Representative) to work within our office and perform duties that are essential and vital to increasing veteran employment success. This year, two highlighted outreach events are the annual DAV & RecruitMilitary Hiring Event and Operation Hire A Hoosier Vet. Both of these events are large in scale, having a wide variety of resources and companies, many of which conduct interviews and will hire on the spot.

Additional partnerships include working with the National Guard and Reservists to inform them of benefits once they get out, assist with employment opportunities, and provide handouts for resources. The biggest event attended is **Guarding Your Future**, where service members who are within a year of discharging have one-on-one interaction to acquire more knowledge of what's available, if they decide they are not going to re-enlist.



The internal initiatives and events held this year were successful in supplying both veteran communities and veteran-friendly companies with valuable resources. There were 3 REMBS (Resource Event For Military Business Startups) events that hosted local veteran organizations, companies looking to hire veterans, resource tables, and guest speakers that included the founders of veteran organizations, representatives from small agencies, and banks. These events were hosted to encourage veterans to seek better employment opportunities or know where to go to start a business of their own.

Our 3rd Annual How & Why to Hire A Veteran Summit gave companies the opportunity to engage with IDVA staff and veteran opportunity advocates about military life, deployments and transitioning, along with learning how to understand military resumes.

In furthering efforts to boost the economy, we are also involved with NextLevel Veterans. This entails working with INVets Founder, Wes Wood, and Hiring Our Heroes to have a booth where service members, from all branches and career orientations who are within their 365 days of being discharged, are able to be informed about the opportunity and advancements available to them and their family if they come to Indiana.

Veteran Opportunity Partners

Administered by the Lt. Governor's office, the veteran opportunity program aims to connect veterans to local businesses looking to hire, which are housed on the IDVA page. It also manages the electronic database that provides real-time job vacancies that are available for veterans at on [IDVA's VOP section](#). The companies listed have a business description and contact information with a link re-directing them to the company's hiring page.

There are 520 partners through this program, 394 being employers. The direct links located on our site offer an opportunity to those seeking assistance, either through employment or services dedicated to veterans and their family members, to filter specific information and learn about the organization that they are interested in knowing more about.

State Approving Agency

The State Approving Agency (SAA) approves college and non-college degree programs, vocational flight training, apprenticeships and other on-the-job training and tests for licensing and certification so that federal educational assistance benefits may be paid to veterans and other eligible persons under the several programs administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The SAA ensures quality instruction is given by the institutions and training establishments. The SAA strives to provide in-depth technical assistance, outreach and liaison with all related organizations and agencies.

SAA and DSO participation at county stand down



OVERVIEW

- FY2017 received highest rating possible (Satisfactory) for execution of the State of Indiana SAA contract
- FY2018 VA currently in session reviewing the State of Indiana SAA contract execution rating
- All six member within the SAA agency are serving on committees for the National Association of State Approving Agencies.
- For the State of Indiana GIBILL approved locations visit the WEAMS System:
<https://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchInstitutionCriteria.do>
- For the State of Indiana GIBILL approved License and Certifications visit this link:
<https://inquiry.vba.va.gov/weamspub/buildSearchLCCriteria.do>

BUDGET

- The SAA is funded by a Federal Contract
- FY2019 Operating Budget — \$606,969.00
- All funds used by the SAA are 100% refunded to the State of Indiana

Social Media and Veteran Outreach

IDVA realizes the impact social media plays in conveying information in a timely manner to multitudes of the constituents we serve. We have increased the followers of our Facebook to 6,368 and seek increased numbers with more posts containing valuable resources and information that are being provided. The content that is provided give pertinent information for statewide and localized events to increase community awareness of resources and events.

We have been publishing videos of our senior staff talking about various subjects. They discussed their role and what program they oversee and military stories with humorous content for individual segments. After 4 months of uploading those videos on a weekly basis, we transferred to 6 video segments that discussed financial guidance subjects from a DOD contractor and bank relations manager. These videos briefly went over information, such as retirement and payday lenders, but also gave contact information where someone could reach out to receive further guidance with their current situation and/or goals. There will be more videos uploaded that will cover a wide array of recourses ranging from Veteran Opportunity Partners, sustainable career options and education, to name a few.

E-Newsletters have started to be distributed to those who have signed up to receive this information at events, in our offices and on our website. This year, there has been an increase from 7.2k to 11.4k subscribers that we are reaching through these e-bulletins. To those who are new, there is a welcome letter sent to them which briefly goes over benefits and resources they may be eligible for, along with the various ways to contact us for further assistance.

There is a multitude of resources available for veterans and their family. Often times when someone who is in crisis finally seeks help, they can become very overwhelmed with the enormous amount of information from an internet search. With this knowledge, the Veterans Resource Hub was created on the state website and launched in September 2018. This page has been used by veterans, IDVA staff, and other veteran organizations to help guide a veteran or family member to what programs they could seek assistance aside from us. The subject matters range from discounts and financial assistance to home modifications and peer to peer support.

VETERANS' HOME

WEST LAFAYETTE, IN

Libby, the IVH Therapy Dog



The Indiana Veterans' Home (IVH) is located on 260 beautiful wooded acres in West Lafayette. IVH is the only veterans' home in Indiana and houses 173 in their nursing home and 27 in their domiciliary. The mission of the Indiana Veterans' Home is to honor Indiana's veterans and their spouses by providing the highest level of care in a therapeutic home-like environment, enhancing health and yielding optimal quality of life. To date, there are 203 veterans living at the IVH from service eras including the Gulf War, Vietnam War, Korean War, and World War II.

IVH continues to look for and implement innovative techniques to improve resident care. IVH has implemented the use of two hydration carts for use on resident units and during special events. These carts can carry and maintain proper temperatures for a variety of beverages and hydration items such as ice creams, popsicles, and similar items to help keep a wide variety of options for

residents readily available. IVH now offers essential oils and aroma therapy services to promote resident well-being and provide comfort. The Food Services department is in the early stages of implementing a new on-unit mobile meal cart system which will allow for a more efficient and individualized meal service provided directly to residents in their unit dining areas. IVH now also offers a resident computer scholarship program to supply interested residents with a personal computer for use while residing at the IVH.

PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS: Alzheimer's, Dementia, COPD, Mental Health Disorders, Cardiac Related Issues, Renal Failure

PAYER SOURCES: Medicare, Medicaid, 70% VA Program, Private Pay

STAFF OVERVIEW: Nurse, QMA's, CNA's, Social Services, Recreation, Food Service, Housekeeping, Business Office, Chaplain Services, Onsite Maintenance and Grounds Crew, Nursing Service & Administration

SERVICES: Medical Care, 24 Hour Nursing Care, Respiratory Care, Dementia Care, Therapy Services (OT, PT & ST), Onsite Pharmacy, Podiatry Care, Nutritional Services, Recreational Activities, X-ray Services, Transportation, Beauty Shop, Resident Gym, Outings & Events, Volunteer Group, Grief Support Groups, Music Therapy Certified, Pet Therapy, Art Therapy through Artful Connections, Aroma Therapy, 120 Day Program, Respite Care

120 DAY PROGRAM: A VA regulated program, the 120 Day Program's mission is to return an employable veteran to independent or semi-independent life in the community. The first 60 days of the program address any of the veteran's mental and/or physical health needs. During the second 60 days of the program, IVH partners with Lafayette Transitional Housing and Work One to find the veteran housing and employment. This year IVH has had several veterans successfully transition back into the community. A few have even returned to thank IVH for putting them through this program.



VETERANS' MEMORIAL CEMETERY

MADISON, IN

The Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery is dedicated to veterans and their families as a lasting memorial, and final resting place, in appreciation and gratitude for their service and sacrifice to our nation. IVMC has hosted several different community and historical events this year to recognize the valor and honor of those who have served their country through these ceremonies.

- A community day was held at the cemetery on April 12, 2018. Volunteers and Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery staff landscaped trees and other areas around the cemetery.
- A Memorial Day service was held on May 28, 2018 in conjunction with the Madison Railroad. Guest speakers included Madison Mayor Damon Welch, Brig. Gen. David N Vesper, Deputy Commander, 38th Infantry Division, and Cathy Hale, CEO, Madison Railroad. During the Memorial Day service, Madison Railroad dedicated three locomotives to honor servicemen and servicewomen, past and present with each locomotive revealing artwork and quotes. Family members of Gus Grissom revealed the artwork of the locomotive dedicated to NASA. US Navy Veterans Clyde James and Scott Bennett revealed the artwork of the locomotive dedicated to the US Navy. USAF Veteran Allen Manning and USMC Veteran Charlie Burton revealed the artwork of the locomotive dedicated to all branches of the Military.
- A ceremony was held on Oct 12, 2018 at 5:30pm to dedicate a bust of Major Samuel Woodfill, Indiana's only Medal of Honor recipient of World War I. Guest Speakers were Ben Newell, author of a book on Samuel Woodfill, State Rep. Randy Frye, State Rep. Terry Goodin, Matt Vincent, Deputy Director, IDVA, representatives of Senator Joe Donnelly, and Dr. Woodfill, great nephew of Samuel.
- A Veterans Day Service was held on Nov 9, 2018 at 11:00am. Guest Speakers were Matt Forrester, Mayor Rep. and USAF Veteran Alan Burnham. A monument of the soldier cross with names of the four individuals who were killed in action who are interred at the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery. PFC Manley Winkley, USMC WW II, SGT Clyde Carter, US Army Korea, TSGT Donald Hoskins, USAF Vietnam and SPC Jonathan Menke, US Army Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- The cemetery participated in Wreath Across America on Dec 15, 2018. A total of 1328 Christmas wreaths will be placed on the gravesites. This is a national program and the mission of WAA is to Remember our fallen veterans, Honor those that have served and teach our children the value of freedom.
- IDVA applied for and was granted an award of \$320,058 from the National Cemetery Administration to raise and realign the headstones at the Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Madison, Indiana. Currently, we are holding our preliminary pre-construction meetings before work begins when the earth at the cemetery begins to thaw in early spring, 2019.

Locomotive Dedication



December 12, 2018

Samuel Woodfill Dedication



IVMC Staff with Chairman and Director



IDVA'S BUDGET SUMMARY

Fund	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
VSO's	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$910,000	\$910,000
Main Operating	\$1,484,559	\$1,329,559	\$2,998,288	\$2,748,228
Cemetery	\$248,208	\$243,183	\$279,577	\$279,577
Veteran's Home	\$27,472,804	\$26,621,033	\$32,029,109	\$23,029,102
MFRF	\$1,678,100	\$1,678,100	\$1,678,100	\$1,678,100
Education	\$507,865	\$493,883	\$520,950	\$606,969

SUPPORTED CAMPAIGNS AND FUNDRAISERS

- Operation Deep Dive: We had been approached by Mayor Hogsett's Office regarding our support in a study conducted in Indianapolis to examine veteran suicide causes and factors. *Operation Deep Dive* is conducting a 5-year research study to **identify what risk factors are leading to the veteran suicide** and what can be done to **reduce or prevent this high rate**. Further information to follow in 2019.
- What A Difference A Day Makes Contest: IDVA was approached by Regions Bank regarding their annual contest to provide \$5,000 and 100 volunteer hours to the veteran organizations that received the most votes. Eleven organizations across the country were listed; from our state, the recognized 501c3 is **HVAF of Indiana** (Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation of Indiana).
- WWI Bells of Peace Toll: A Proclamation was received from Governor Holcomb's office announcing that on the 11th hour on November 11th (11-11-11), Veterans' Day would be commemorated through pausing during that time with the **Bells of Peace-World War I Remembrance Day**. IDVA was able to distribute this information and partner with the World War I Commission to push forward its agenda to sound bells through a free app, that included the countdown and alarm, information about the 100-year Armistice anniversary, and pictures from other participants.
- Helping Heroes of America: IDVA participated and was recognized in a motorcycle ride fundraiser. The proceeds go to **veteran families who need basic necessities** or have experienced a hardship. They visit and engage with elderly veterans in homes, work with communities to provide other services, and send care packages to deployed service members. Through this event, they raised over thirteen thousand dollars and we have been asked to participate in this same fundraiser next year.
- Homes For Our Troops: IDVA participated in and was recognized at the HFOT event in Milroy, hosted by Jean Ann Harcourt. HFOT's mission is to build and donate **specially adapted custom homes nationwide for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans**, to enable them to rebuild their lives. The event raised \$35,000 to contribute to SPC Jacob Lyerla and his wife, Ashely, to live in a mortgage-free house that accommodates his needs after injuries he sustained from an IED. Governor Holcomb took time to speak to those in attendance, the family and provide a photo-op with all veterans that were there.
- Not Invisible: IUPUI hosted an exhibition known as "I Am Not Invisible" in November. This exhibit showed black and white photos of eighteen **female veterans that attend the campus**, along with their shared and submitted stories. The intent of this exhibit was to set a platform where everyone could improve awareness that women also serve their country. Kim Bloodgood, Director for the IUPUI Office for Veterans and Military Personnel, and Laura McKee, IDVA's Women Veterans' Coordinator, worked closely together to ensure the success of this exhibit.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS



Vietnam Moving Memorial Wall

Warrior's Hope Peer-To-Peer



Planting poppies at the Veteran's Home (Memorial Day)



YES 2 Vets offers free yoga classes to veterans and their dependents



Libby, the Veterans Home therapy dog, was "interviewed" by local news about her influence



Mayor's Appreciation Picnic

This year, IDVA raised over \$7,500 for the Shepherd's House through our annual golf outing. This organization assists those who are recovering from substance abuse by providing a safe, uplifting environment that they can succeed in and prepare them to be self-sustaining.



IDVA representatives were able to deliver Governor Holcomb's letter of appreciation and recognition to Mr. Levernier and Mr. Wolfe prior to them receiving the **French Legion of Honor**, France's highest and most distinguished honor, from Consul General of France, Guillaume Lacroix. Both men were additionally honored to be recognized with letters sent from their city's mayor, Mayor Hogsett, and Vice President Pence.

This year we were honored to speak and present awards at the inaugural Native American Hoosier Veteran Ceremony. In addition to honoring the Native American Hoosier veterans, the ceremony helped to foster a strong relationship between the tribes' councils and the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. Each veteran in attendance received a challenge coin after Ralph Wilson (Korean War) and Jerry Campbell (Vietnam War) were honored for their heroism with the Distinguished Hoosier Award.



MOVING FORWARD

- We have partnered with IU Bloomington to establish and speak on a panel for junior and senior psychology students who will learn about military families, lifestyle and how service members deal with death and grief. This will give them insight that they would not otherwise receive and provide vital information that will prepare them for real-world experiences they will encounter with military patients and family members.
- Our 2019 Golf Outing will be held at Valle Vista Golf Club in Greenwood, IN on May 17, 2019. All proceeds will go to *Helping Hands For Freedom*, which provides assistance through donated funds to help military and Gold Star families that have lost a loved one or are suffering with injuries from combat, including PTSD, TBI and moral injuries, which are internal sufferings resulting from trauma when a person is faced with moral dilemmas that had to be ignored or carried out in action.
- *In The Community* is a new initiative to improve community relations. Beginning January 2019, the E-Newsletter will showcase a CVSO, and a military memorial or veteran organization in that same area. The CVSO will have a short bio and contact information, along with a recent picture; the county highlight will contain an additional section featuring a military historical fact or dedication site within their county or a military-focused organization they work closely with. These spotlights will be done monthly and additionally transcribed to the website and social media outlets.
- IDVA is currently in the project planning phase after being awarded a \$320,058.00 grant from the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to raise and realign the headstones at the Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Madison. In February 2019, IDVA's Legislative Director, Michael Aichele, will begin the pre-application process for an expansion grant from the NCA to expand our grounds.

Indiana War Memorial Celebration
Veterans' Day 2018



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