

## **OVERVIEW**

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

In 1887, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a prominent organization representing Civil War veterans, founded the Grand Army Home at King. This facility near Waupaca was eventually turned over to the State of Wisconsin and became the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. In August 2001, the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove opened and in February, 2013, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs opened a new 72-bed Veterans Home in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Each of the veterans homes offers high quality skilled nursing care and retirement options for veterans and their spouses.

In 1901, the state honored Civil War veterans by establishing a GAR headquarters and museum in the State Capitol. In 1989, the Legislature authorized the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to build a new museum, honoring veterans from all wars, across the street from the Capitol. The award-winning Wisconsin Veterans Museum opened in 1993.

In 1919, the state issued its only wartime bonus to Wisconsin veterans of World War I. In 1945, rather than issue a wartime bonus with little lasting value, the Legislature created programs that offered long-term benefits for state veterans and their families.

To administer state veterans programs, the Legislature created the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) in 1945. The department was given the administrative responsibility for the Grand Army Home at King, the GAR Memorial Hall in the Capitol, the state's economic and education assistance benefits for veterans, and other programs. It also assumed responsibility for segregated funds for veterans that were combined in 1961 to form the Veterans Trust Fund.

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

## **AGENCY DESCRIPTION**

The department was created by Chapter 580, Laws of 1945, to ensure that the state's veterans receive the state benefits to which they are entitled and to assist them in securing their federal veterans benefits. The department is headed by a Secretary appointed by the Governor.

Programs included in the department's mission are the: Wisconsin Veterans Homes, Wisconsin Veterans Memorial cemeteries, Veterans Administration Regional Claims Office, Military Funeral Honors Program, Veterans Assistance Program and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. For the most part, these programs are designed to provide health, educational assistance, economic assistance and other services to specified veterans of the armed forces of the United States.

### **MISSION**

The mission of the department is to work on behalf of Wisconsin's veterans community—veterans, their families and their survivors—in recognition of their service and sacrifice to our state and nation.

### **OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

The Office of the Secretary drives the department's overall strategy and long-range planning initiatives and oversees the operations of the WDVA.

The Office of the Secretary includes:

#### ***Secretary***

The Secretary works closely with the Governor's office, other heads of Wisconsin State agencies, the regional directors of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and state and federal legislators to ensure the department's overall mission and goals provide value to the veterans living in the State of Wisconsin. The Secretary oversees the operation of three veterans homes that provide long term care, three veterans cemeteries, a claims assistance center, and many other programs and services for our state's veterans.

#### ***Deputy Secretary***

The Deputy Secretary serves as a surrogate for the Secretary and is responsible for the day-to-day internal operations of the department, including the department's budget, resolution of all critical issues and oversight of major contracts.

#### ***Assistant Deputy Secretary***

The Assistant Deputy Secretary serves the Secretary and is the primary contact for inter-governmental agency functions. The Assistant Deputy Secretary also serves as the agency legislative liaison.

### **Office of Budget, Finance and Facilities**

The Office of Budget, Finance and Facilities (OBFF) consists of two Bureaus; the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Budget (BPPB) and the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS). BPPB develops, monitors and manages the department's annual and biennial capital budgets; provides policy and statistical analysis of department programs; coordinates risk assessment, internal control development and internal audit services; and maintains effective working relationships with the State Budget Office, Legislative Fiscal Bureau and United States Department of Veterans Affairs officials. OPPB also coordinates collection and analysis of demographic data concerning Wisconsin veterans; department-wide planning and development of internal policies, administrative procedures and business improvement projects; and implementation of strategic planning. BFS is responsible for all financial operations in the department. BFS manages the accounts receivable and payable functions; maintains all contracts, purchase orders and purchase cards; administers loan accounting and servicing; and oversees strict adherence to internal controls.

### **Office of Legal Counsel**

The Office of Legal Counsel provides legal advice to the department's program managers and staff; supervises internal litigation matters (program/service denial appeals); supervises external litigation matters on behalf of the agency (bankruptcy filings, personnel appeals, and others); and coordinates external litigation handled on behalf of WDVA by the Department of Justice. The office also coordinates WDVA's rulemaking activities.

### **Office of Public Affairs**

The Office of Public Affairs is responsible for overseeing and managing the WDVA public information activities and media relations. It is responsible for developing and implementing communications and public relations strategies with regard to priorities of the agency.

The Office is also responsible for planning statewide public events such as press conferences, listening sessions, town hall meetings and special ceremonies for veterans holidays such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day and many others.

### **Wisconsin Veterans Museum**

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) employs exhibits, displays and presentations to tell the stories of men and women from Wisconsin who served in America's conflicts from the Civil War to today's Global War on Terrorism. The WVM, accredited by the American Association of Museums, contains 10,000 square feet of displays at the Capitol Square location and has a permanent exhibit located in the Marden Center at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

## **AFFILIATED BOARD AND COUNCIL**

### **BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

The Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs is a nine-member, part-time, citizen board that provides advice to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Each of Wisconsin's eight congressional districts is represented by a Board member who must be a veteran meeting the requirements of §45.01 (12), Wis. Stats. There is one at-large member. Board members are appointed by the Governor for four-year terms with the advice and consent of the Wisconsin State Senate. Board members' four-year terms are staggered and expire on May 1st in odd-numbered years. Each Board member is required by law to take and file an official oath prior to assuming office.

Current members of the Board include:

- Larry Kutschma of Lake Geneva, 1<sup>st</sup> District
- John M. Gaedke of Merrimac , 2<sup>nd</sup> District
- Daniel Bohlin of Stitzer, 3<sup>rd</sup> District
- Carl Krueger of Cudahy, 4th District
- Kevin Nicholson of Wauwatosa, 5th District
- John Townsend of Fond du Lac, 6th District
- Cathy Gorst of Marshfield, 7th District
- Leigh Neville-Neil of Green Bay, 8th District
- Alan Richards of Grafton, At-large

### **COUNCIL ON VETERANS PROGRAMS**

The Council on Veterans Programs is composed of representatives from twenty-six groups that affiliate with veterans' issues. Created under § 15.497(2), Wis. Stats., the Council advises the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs on solutions and policy alternatives relating to the problems of veterans.

## **RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR WISCONSIN VETERANS**

### **Biennial Budget**

The 2013-15 budget provided \$5.3 million general fund tax dollars to the Veterans Trust Fund in addition to permitting the WDVA to transfer any unencumbered program revenue (PR) balance from any of the homes operation appropriations or the mortgage loan repayment fund.

The veterans home at King was provided 110.6 FTE PR positions and the associated authority to meet the increase in member acuity levels in addition to \$603,600 in PR in fiscal year to fund the cost of replacing 100 patient lifts and to fully fund master lease payments for prior purchases. The veterans home at Union Grove was provided 40.0 FTE PR positions and the associated expenditure authority to staff the newly constructed Gates Hall skilled nursing facility and to add

a 1.0 FTE security supervisor and two half-time security officers to improve after hours and weekend security.

The veterans home at Chippewa Falls was provided \$1,180,000 PR in fiscal year 2013-14 and \$1,170,000PR in fiscal year 2014-15 to reflect costs of operating the home. In addition 2.0 FTE were transferred from the veterans home in Union Grove to Chippewa Falls for the Commandants position and an Accountant.

A task force was created to be chaired by the WDVA with representatives from the Department of Health Services, Corrections, Military Affairs, and Administration to provide recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on the future operations of the homes and review opportunities for coordination of interagency services.

Other biennial budget items included a permanent exemption from the long-term care bed assessment for state veterans homes, providing 1.0 FTE PR to improve debt collection, provide 5.00 FTE FED and associated expenditure authority at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery and additional spending authority for the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery for additional LTE's.

The budget gave the WDVA the ability to admit veterans and spouses who do meet the one-year residency requirement, expanded eligibility to the Wisconsin G.I. bill, permit two tribal colleges the ability to receive reimbursement from tribal gaming revenues, increased the Tribal Veterans Service Officer Grants by \$1,500 annually, provided \$500,000 SEG to VETTransfer to support entrepreneurial training and start-up grants to veterans, repealed the disabled veterans employment tax credit and instead provided a \$500,000 grant program to employers administered by the Department of Workforce Development to employers who hire disabled veterans, and provided an income tax exemption for armed forces members who die on active duty.

Finally, the biennial budget also expanded the property tax credit, provided vouchers for returning veterans for hunting and fishing, created a sum sufficient SEG appropriation for Military Funeral Honors to support stipend payments to veterans service organizations, provided to the state veterans museum 1.0 SEG FTE to increase outreach and \$625,600 for maintenance improvements, moved positions from classified to unclassified to be consistent with other state agencies, moved the Commandants of the homes to classified service to improve continuity of operations and deleted a unused 1.0 FTE unclassified Division Administrator position, and made several technical statutory language changes.

### **Developing the Veteran Workforce**

In an effort to promote the businesses of military veterans, 2013 Wisconsin Act 192 established a benchmark for state agencies to attain when contracting. Under the law, state agencies must attempt to ensure they pay disabled veteran-owned businesses at least 1-percent of the total

amount expended for state procurements or certain state construction projects in each fiscal year. The WDVA also let an interagency task force that identified three professions for accelerating civilian certification: law enforcement, nursing, and commercial truck driving. Funded by a grant from the National Governor's Association, the task force led to the creation of the LEAD, Vet2RN, and MOVE-IT programs to help veterans with certain military training enter the civilian workforce faster.

### **Providing Assistance to Those that Assist Veterans**

Countless organizations in communities across the state provide services and assistance to veterans and their families. Many of these organizations lack sufficient financial funding to serve as many veterans as possible. So 2013 Wisconsin Act 190 authorized the WDVA to award up to \$250,000 in grants, up to \$25,000 each, to nonprofit organizations that provide assistance to veterans or their families.

### **Moses Hall Authorization**

The WDVA provides skilled nursing long term care on three campuses, the oldest campus is at King. Legislation, 2013 Wisconsin Act 187, authorized the John R. Moses skilled nursing facility at King, which will be a 200-bed skilled nursing facility that will replace the aged Stordock Hall and will be state-of-the-art in design and function.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War**

In March 2013, WDVA Secretary John Scocos, along with Governor Scott Walker, kicked off the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War at a ceremony with Vietnam veterans at the Capitol.

More than 165,000 Wisconsinites served in Vietnam, with 1,239 paying the ultimate sacrifice. With about 135,000, Vietnam veterans are the largest group of living veterans in Wisconsin.

President Barack Obama has proclaimed May 28, 2012 through November 11, 2025 as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. The President is calling all to honor Vietnam veterans, the fallen, the wounded, those unaccounted for, former prisoners of war, their families and all who served.

The WDVA has joined the Vietnam War Commemoration as a commemorative chair. The Commemorative Partner Program is designed for federal, state, and local communities, as well as veterans' organizations and nongovernmental organizations to assist in thanking and honoring our nation's Vietnam veterans with dignified, memorable events to pay tribute to all veterans.

## **MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2015-17**

- Find more ways to keep the department solvent, including infusions into the Veterans Trust Fund.
- Provide new ways to continue to make it easier for transitioning veterans to achieve employment immediately after discharging from service.
- Continue to produce programs, benefits and services that will assist veterans in achieving employment – especially disabled and female veterans.
- Explore more ways to increase outreach.
- Pave the way toward building a new state-of-the-art 200 bed skilled nursing facility at the Veterans Home at King.
- Establish long-term plan for the future of veterans homes throughout the state.
- Expand the Wisconsin GI Bill to include veterans that are eligible if they resided in the state of Wisconsin five consecutive years immediately preceding the date of application.
- Continue to host events that commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War.
- Provide additional staffing for the Wisconsin Veterans Homes to adjust to the changing demographics which include higher ages with needs for more medical attention.
- Increase the financial position of the Wisconsin Veterans Homes.
- Decrease overall overtime and agency staffing levels at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes.
- Develop a pilot program at the veterans homes to better address the needs of veterans diagnosed with dementia and other mental health conditions, such as PTSD.
- Initiate six sigma lean government initiatives throughout the department.

## **DIVISION SUMMARIES**

### **DIVISION OF VETERANS BENEFITS**

The Division of Veterans Benefits administers an array of grants, benefits, programs, and services to all eligible state veterans, their families, and to many organizations that serve veterans. These benefits, programs, and services assist Wisconsin veterans by providing education assistance to expand employment opportunities, transportation to federal USDVA medical appointments, access to health care services not provided by the USDVA, tools for overcoming homelessness, and subsistence assistance in emergency situations. The division also maintains responsibility for two of the agency's cemeteries, located at Spooner and Union Grove, as well as the Military Funeral Honors Program.

#### **Programs and Services**

- Grants for education and job training
- Grants for health care and basic subsistence

- Grants to County and Tribal Veterans Service Offices
- Grants to veterans service organizations who provide claims assistance and transportation services
- Interments for veterans and eligible family members at state veterans cemeteries, together with Military Funeral Honors

The Division is divided into two bureaus: the Bureau of Veterans Benefits and the Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services. Both bureaus work closely with County Veterans Service Offices (CVSOs), Tribal Veterans Service Offices (TVSOs), and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs).

### **Bureau of Veterans Benefits**

The Bureau of Veterans Benefits offers an array of benefits to qualified Wisconsin veterans statewide. The bureau consists of the Grants Unit, Eligibility Unit and the Veterans Benefits Resource Center (VBRC).

#### **Grants Unit**

The Grants Section administers Veterans Retraining Grants, Veterans Education Reimbursement Grants, Assistance to Needy Veterans Grants (consisting primarily of Health Care and Subsistence Aid components), County and Tribal Veterans' Service Office grants, veterans service organization grants, and grants to municipalities and nonprofit organizations.

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

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

**Grant to VETransfer** – Provided \$500,000 in one-time funding to assist veteran-owned start-up businesses and veteran entrepreneurship training.

**Grants to Local Governments** – Provided up to \$150,000 in one-time grants to local governments, cities, villages, and towns that provide services: such as police and fire support, solid waste disposal and road maintenance to veterans nursing homes.

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

**Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant (ANVG)** – Provides assistance for veterans who need vision, dental, or hearing care, three areas not normally covered by the federal VA. This program also provides temporary emergency financial aid to veterans and their dependents in the event of an illness, disability or death. Grant awards for health care and subsistence aid combined cannot exceed a \$7,500 lifetime limit.

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

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

**Veterans Service Organization (VSO) Grants** – Provided financial assistance to veterans service organizations of up to \$70,000 for each organization assisting veterans with claims for benefits from the USDVA.

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

**Total Veterans Trust Fund Benefits and Services Disbursed**  
*July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015<sup>1</sup>*

<i>Program</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Veterans Retraining Grants	64	\$167,542
Aid to Needy Veterans Grants	625	\$565,357
Veterans Education Reimbursement Grants	370	\$857,673
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County Veterans Service Office Grants	138	\$1,421,500
Tribal Veterans Service Office Grants	20	\$222,000
Transportation Grants	73	\$440,000
Veterans Service Organization Grants	9	\$524,103
Military Funeral Honors <sup>2</sup>	13,460	\$661,400
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14,759</b>	<b>\$4,857,575</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Data source: VBATS

<sup>2</sup> Military Funeral Honors Stipends are funded by General Purpose Revenue.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Converted to electronic certification notification system for WI G.I. Bill certifications for all WTCS campuses and for all 13 of the 4 year institutions of the UWS.
- Changed the rules for the assistance to needy veterans grant program to expand eligibility for low-income veterans.
- All Veterans Benefit Specialists within the Bureau have been trained on making eligibility determinations insuring no single point of failure.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Explore changes to health care aid grant that will result in more effective treatment of the dental needs of veterans.
- Streamline and automate the application processes.
- Study and improve business processes within the unit in an effort to enhance effectiveness of staff and operations, quality of work, and responsiveness to unit customers.
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures.

### **Eligibility Unit**

The eligibility unit determines eligibility and also certifies veteran status for other state agencies providing benefits for veterans. To qualify for most Wisconsin state veterans' benefits, programs, or services, a veteran must first establish general eligibility for Wisconsin state veterans' benefits. Eligibility criteria for Wisconsin state veterans' benefits, programs, and services, are set in state law.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Approved 8,976 Chapter 45 eligibility determinations for Wisconsin veteran benefits programs.
- Certified 5,239 veterans to receive the WI GI Bill Tuition Remission Waiver for the Wisconsin Technical College and UW Systems.
- Certified 2,529 veterans and their eligible unremarried surviving spouses for the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouse Property Tax Credit for the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.
- Reduced the application processing time from 6 – 8 weeks to 2 – 3 weeks.
- Developed an ongoing training plan.
- Issued professional or occupational license fee waivers to 1297 veterans for the Veterans Fee Waiver program.

- Issued 107 veterans a DNR Returning Service Member License Voucher to receive a free hunting or fishing license from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- Verified the eligibility of 11, 616 veterans to receive the Department of Transportation’s veteran identifier on their driver’s license or photo I.D. card.
- Approved 369 Veterans Education Reimbursement Grants (VetEd)
- Approved 64 Veterans Retraining Grants.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Study and improve business processes within the unit in an effort to enhance effectiveness of staff and operations, quality of work, and responsiveness to unit customers.
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures.
- Streamline and automate application processes.

**Veterans Benefit Resource Center (VBRC)**

In March 2012, the WDVA created the Veterans Benefits Resource Center (VBRC) which provides veterans improved access to information about the department’s programs, benefits and services via phone, chat (through WDVA’s website), walk in and email communications. The goal of the VBRC is to ensure that veterans who contact WDVA during business hours will be able to immediately speak to center support staff who are trained to provide information about the department’s programs, benefits and services.

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

The top four reasons for contacting the VBRC:

- |                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| • Wisconsin GI Bill benefits      | 3,199 |
| • Federal benefits, miscellaneous | 1,218 |
| • Federal education benefits      | 1,046 |
| • Property tax credit             | 2,074 |

The top four service periods of all contacts:

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| • Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)           | 713   |
| • Vietnam veterans                        | 1,530 |
| • Unknown/Other/20 year WI National Guard | 2,392 |
| • Operation Desert Shield/Storm           | 676   |

The top two methods of contact:

- |               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| • Voice/Phone | 8,053 |
|---------------|-------|

- E-mail 4,302

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Sent out over 11,462 informational packets regarding state and federal benefits and employment resource to recently separated veterans.
- Processed 257 discharge upgrades and medals requests for veterans and/or their family members.
- Certified 1,338 veterans to receive a fee waiver for certain professional and occupational licenses.
- Issued 62 Disabled Veterans Owned Business Certifications to increase the opportunity for disabled veteran firms to sell its products and services to the State of Wisconsin.
- Developed and implemented standard operating procedures.
- Established higher customer satisfaction utilizing pre-chat and post-chat survey's within the Veteran Information System (VIS) and the Live Chat feature.
- Developed an ongoing training plan for the section to increase staff knowledge of the department's programs, services and benefits.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop and implement standard operating procedures.
- Continue to improve business processes within the unit in an effort to enhance effectiveness of staff and operations, quality of work, and responsiveness to unit customers.
- Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of information and communications provided by the VBRC to veterans.
- Obtain more useable data from customers to help gauge more accurately their needs.

### **Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services**

The Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services manages two of the three state veterans cemeteries: Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Spooner and Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Union Grove, the fifth busiest state veterans cemetery in the nation. The Bureau also administers the Military Funeral Honors Program. The Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at King is maintained and operated by the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. Interments are available to eligible veterans, spouses, and dependents at all three locations.

**Military Funeral Honors Program (MFHP)** – Coordinates and provides military funeral honors for the interment of eligible Wisconsin veterans. A stipend of up to \$50 is paid to eligible veterans service organizations that perform military funeral honors.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Interred 2,987 veterans, spouses, and dependents over the biennium, of which 2,137 were interred at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. An increase of 88% over 2014.
- Military Funeral Honors Program (MFHP) coordinated honors for 14,406 military funerals over the biennium. An increase of 7.4% over 2014.
- MFHP trained 50 new veterans organizations, now certified to perform services and receive the grant stipend.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Complete construction of new columbarium, new curb and gutter, and improvements to existing irrigation system at Southern.
- Complete construction of columbarium, urn gardens, and irrigation system at Northern.
- Expand the number of burial services available at both Southern and Northern to meet growing demand.
- Develop a uniform plot and scheduling program for all three state veterans cemeteries to improve availability and quality of burial services.
- Develop initial plans for the expansion of services, amenities, and possible columbarium at Central.
- Research the possibility of securing 50 additional acres to expand the size of Northern. Explore the placement of a Battle Cross monument at the Northern.

## **DIVISION OF VETERANS HOMES**

The Division of Veterans Homes provides long-term and short-term rehabilitative care to veterans, eligible spouses and gold star parents at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes located in King and Union Grove, and Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. The Veterans Home at King provides skilled nursing services for up to 721 veterans. The Veterans Home at Union Grove provides skilled nursing services for up to 158 veterans and is licensed to serve up to 40 veterans at the assisted living level of care. The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls provides skilled nursing services for up to 72 veterans. The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls is unique from the other homes in that the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has contracted out the operations of the facility to a private healthcare provider.

### Programs and Services

- Skilled nursing services
- Long term care
- Short term rehabilitation services
- Restorative nursing care

- Pharmacy services
- Dementia and Alzheimer care
- Radiology and EKG
- Dental care
- Laboratory services
- Dietary and nutritional services
- Social services
- Podiatry
- Optometry
- Audiology
- Respiratory therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Speech therapy
- Medical transportation
- Recreational therapy
- Physician services and consultants

### **Wisconsin Veterans Home at King**

The Veterans Home at King is located on a 325 acre campus, one mile southwest of the town of Waupaca. The facility was founded in 1887 by the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War Veterans Organization. The Home is the largest skilled nursing facility in the state, serving up to 721 members.

The individual skilled nursing facilities at King include the 205-bed Ainsworth Hall, the 116-bed MacArthur Hall, the 200-bed Olson Hall and the 200-bed Stordock Hall. Each of these four buildings is separately licensed. Three-quarters of all beds are located in private rooms.

In addition to skilled nursing, dietary, maintenance and housekeeping, the following person-centered services are provided to our members:

- Physician/dentist
- Physical therapy/occupational therapy/speech therapy
- Social services
- Pharmacy
- Laboratory/X-ray
- Medical and recreational transport
- Group and one-on-one activities
- Marden Center (bowling, theater, coffee shop, fitness room, wood shop, library, computer center)

- Boating/fishing
- Barber/beautician
- Security/fire protection
- Laundry
- Ministerial support
- Work therapy

Beyond the items listed above, the factor that makes the Veterans Home at King both special and unique are the 500 plus volunteers, many associated with Veteran Services Organizations (VSO), that donate tens of thousands of hours to our members every year. And if that were not enough, the VSOs also donate tens of thousands of dollars to our members every year.

#### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Achieved Medicare certification in all four (4) licensed facilities at King providing financial benefits to the department and the members.
- Achieved a deficiency-free survey in all four (4) facilities by the federal VA.
- Developed and implemented a clinical Namaste relaxation program at Ainsworth Hall for dementia members and thereby reducing the number of aggressive behaviors.
- Reduced re-hospitalization rate to 12% (regulatory guidelines is <25%)
- Reorganized executive team to improve administrative and quality of care oversight.

#### Upcoming Initiatives 2015-2017:

- Raise funds to update the Quadrangle Park in accordance with design adopted in October, 2016
- Redesign the gifts and bequest process to provide improved responsiveness and accountability to donors.
- Achieve a federal CMS 5 star quality rating in all four facilities (currently, three of four facilities enjoy a 5 star rating).
- Implement Point-Click-Care electronic health record which integrates clinical and financial data and enhances the quality of care and accountability.
- Implement automated medication ordering throughout the Veterans Home Division to reduce time-consuming paperwork and faxing.
- Implement the Namaste relaxation program for dementia members in all four buildings.

#### **Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove**

The Veterans Home at Union Grove is located on the campus of the Southern Wisconsin Center (SWC). The facilities at Union Grove include a 40-bed community-based residential facility (CBRF) which in addition to assisted living (AL) care also provides memory care services for veterans and their spouses and a 158-bed skilled nursing facility (SNF).

Boland Hall, a 120-bed SNF, offers the following services:

- Skilled nursing care
- Physical, occupational and speech therapy
- Visits by physicians and nurse practitioners
- Dental services
- Podiatry services
- Social Work services
- Hospice care
- Activities

The completion of the renovations of Gates Hall has added an additional 38 skilled nursing beds to the Boland Hall license. Gates Hall is connected to Boland Hall via a covered walkway.

Fairchild Hall is licensed as a 40-bed CBRF providing assisted living and memory care. The CBRF provides the following services:

- Nursing services
- Medication management
- Social work services
- Transportation to off-site medical services
- Activities
- Member Council

Maurer Hall is connected to Boland Hall and houses the administrative offices, kitchen, chapel and other spaces dedicated for member activities including ceramics, woodworking shop, leather crafts, and library and computer center.

#### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Successfully completed an annual federal VA survey with no healthcare deficiencies.
- In partnership with the Federal VA open up a new state-of-the-art federal VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) via Lease agreement.
- Achieved positive cash flow on campus with revenues consistently exceeding expenses
- Certified all staff in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Opened a new 38 bed skilled nursing facility (Gates Hall)
- Improved training in wound care with 5 new nursing staff achieving national wound-care certification.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue to enhance revenue generation and gain efficiencies in expense management
- Achieve a federal 5 star quality rating (now 4 Stars) and state average is 3.5 Stars.
- Successfully implement a new electronic medical record (Point-Click-Care) to enhance the quality of care and accountability.

### **The Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls**

The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls is located in the city of Chippewa Falls. It is licensed as a skilled nursing home with 72 beds.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Achieved 98.8% occupancy
- Reduced the number of state survey citations from 8 to 4
- Achieved and maintained 5-Star status since March, 2015
- Reduced the percentage of members self-reporting moderate to severe pain from 12% to 6% (State average = 9%)

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Sustain occupancy at current level
- Reduce the percentage of members self-reporting moderate to severe pain from 12% to 6% (State average = 9%)
- Further reduce state survey citations from 4 to 2 (state average is 8)
- Maintain 5-Star status (state average is 3.5 Stars)
- Reduce members with catheters inserted in the bladder from 7.7% to 3.5% (State average = 3.9%)

## **DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES**

### **Division Description**

The Division of Veterans Services provides programs, services and benefit information to Wisconsin veterans and their families. The division is organized into the Bureau of Claims and Bureau of Programs and Services.

### **Division Mission**

The primary mission is to provide a seamless continuum of services accessed by veterans, their families and their survivors-which result in obtaining all federal and state benefits to which they are entitled.

### Programs and Services include:

- Federal VA claims
- State Approving Agency (SAA)
- Veterans Benefit Outreach and Employment Assistance
- Veterans Housing & Recovery Program (VHRP)

### ***Federal VA Claims***

#### Program Summary

The Bureau of Claims assists Wisconsin veterans and their dependents with federal claims for VA compensation, pension, education, medical care, and death benefits. The bureau also supplies accreditation and continuing education training to the state County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) community to provide initial accreditation and follow on accreditation continuing education credits. The bureau is located at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) Regional Office in Milwaukee.

#### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Walk in clients increased from 2,908 veterans to 3,397 veterans.
- Power of Attorneys submitted by veterans increased from 5711 to 6685 veterans.
- Claims completed for Wisconsin Veterans by the Milwaukee USDVA increased from 44,632 to 47,184.
- Of the claims completed, DVA POA veterans increased from 22,778 to 23,832.
- Economic impact of the claims completed for DVA POA veterans was over \$35 million each FY.
- Continued to participate in various workshops, conferences and other events offered by other agencies and organizations in order to promote services and benefits to veterans.
- Participated in various mental health events sponsored by the Federal VA and other organizations.
- Continued to meet with the Federal VA, Department of Corrections to identify needs for veterans being released from incarceration.
- Updated the Incarcerated Veterans Handbook and webpage information regarding Veterans Courts.

### **Veterans Housing and Recovery Program**

#### Program Summary

The VHRP is designed for homeless veterans and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. Program located at three different locations offer stable, secure and safe housing to these veterans while they receive the training and other services necessary for them to become self-supporting.

### Accomplishments FY 2014- FY 2015

- Participated in the various Veteran Stand downs conducted throughout the state.
- Met or exceeded all program goals established for each program.
- Conducted a variety of outreach activities to further promote the programs.

### **State Approving Agency (SAA)**

#### Program Summary

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

### Accomplishments 2013- 2015

- Conducted 100% of the compliance survey visits required by the federal VA contract.
- Submitted 100% of visit reports within 35 calendar days of the visit.
- Submitted 100% of contract reimbursement invoices within 45 days of the end of the quarter.
- Received a rating of satisfactory from the JPRG (Joint Peer Review Group).
- Attended and supported the annual WACRAO (WI Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers) Veterans' Benefits Workshops held.
- Participated in monthly teleconferences with the Regional Processing Office, St. Louis, dealing with challenges and improvements to the compliance survey process.

### **Veterans Benefit Outreach and Employment Assistance**

The Outreach unit works actively to inform veterans about accessing federal and state benefits, programs and services, assists unemployed and under-employed veterans in seeking and obtaining employment, and educates employers on the benefits of hiring veterans.

### Accomplishments FY2014-FY2015

- The Outreach unit coordinated and/or participated in more than 200 events throughout the State.
- Conducted various Business Symposiums throughout the state with many businesses participating and agreeing to increase their effort in hiring Veterans.

- Participated in various employment workshops for veterans.
- Participated and planned various female Veteran Outreach events and conferences.
- Provided outreach and supportive services to the 11 Native American Tribes located in Wisconsin.
- Continued to engage veterans at Campus Open Houses to highlight benefits, programs and services available to student veterans.
- Continued to participate in various workshops, conferences and other events offered by other agencies and organizations in order to promote services and benefits to veterans.
- Participated in various mental health events sponsored by the Federal VA and other organizations.
- Continued to meet with the Federal VA, Department of Corrections to identify needs for veterans being released from incarceration.
- Updated the Incarcerated Veterans Handbook and webpage information regarding Veterans Courts.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Place greater emphasis on employer outreach, which is intended to expand the number of job openings available with employers who are favorably inclined to hire veterans.
- Promote innovative employment training programs, such as Veterans in Piping which is an initiative preparing veterans for careers in the piping trades as well as other opportunities for veterans to translate their skills into a new career.
- Continue to strengthen the partnership with Department of Workforce Development, Department of Military Affairs and Wisconsin Employment Resource Connection (WERC) in order to address employment needs of Wisconsin veterans.
- Place emphasis on using the state's Veterans Noncompetitive Hiring Program.
- Develop and implement a women veterans' employment initiative, which is intended to expand employment opportunities for women veterans.
- Begin planning for the transfer of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program which includes the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) program, from the Department of Workforce Development to WDVA's Division of Veterans Services.
- Provide training to DVOP specialists and LVERs regarding the department's mission, programs, services and benefits.
- Place greater emphasis on the delivery of intensive services (e.g., counseling, assessment, career guidance and referral to training), which better prepare veteran jobseekers to compete for job openings.
- Provide six months of personal case management and enhanced job services at Wisconsin Job Centers, through the DVOPs and LVERs, including access to counselors to help navigate and coordinate job searches, connecting veterans with employers and job banks,

working with them on translating their military specialties into civilian skills and providing them guidance on training.

- Work with promoters, sponsors, other agencies and coordinators in planning Wisconsin Wounded Warrior Summit, dedication for Vietnam era veterans, women veterans conference and health summits, homeless veterans summit and stand downs, employment and benefit career fairs and veteran benefit expos.
- Coordinate with the National Association for Black Veterans (NABVETS), the Hispanic Veterans Council and the Urban League of Wisconsin to provide targeted outreach efforts to the state's minority veteran community. Contact media outlets in urban areas, with formats that appeal to the state's minority veteran population to promote interview and panel style discussions on veterans benefits, program and services.
- Continue to improve upon and implement new ideas and approaches to reach veterans through social media markets (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn...), internet campaigns and develop a newsletter highlighting the different events WDVA and its partners are planning.
- Engage veteran representatives at schools to collaborate on scheduling and conducting "Campus Open Houses" to highlight what benefits, programs and services are available to their student veteran population and develop relationships with the various veterans groups and organizations on campuses to provide benefits, program and services information briefings to their respective members.

#### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Participated in the various Veteran Stand downs conducted throughout the state.
- Met or exceeded all program goals established for each program.
- Conducted a variety of outreach activities to further promote the programs.

### **DIVISION OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

The Division of Management Services provides management and program support to the entire Department's operating units. Division services include human resources, risk management, payroll and benefits, employment relations, records management, open records administration, Central Office facilities management, building and safety, fleet management, Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) and information technology.

#### Service provided include:

- Human resource management
- Payroll and benefits management
- Health, safety and risk management services

- Records management
- Open records administration
- Mail and fleet
- Facilities management for Central Office
- Information technology, imaging and telecommunication services
- Central coordination of the department's administrative process and policies
- Continuity of operations planning

### **Bureau of Administrative Services**

The mission of the Bureau of Administrative Services is to ensure the recruitment and retention of the best possible staff to provide benefits and services to Wisconsin veterans. The bureau ensures that the department establishes and administers human resources and payroll policies in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations to maintain a productive workforce.

### **Accomplishments 2013-2015**

- Created an Automated Performance Review System for employees and managers. Accomplished with assistance of BIOS
- Provided guidance and implemented PTA web for the recording of work hours for all staff other than those on a 24/7 basis.
- Provided guidance and insured compliance directing all employees to receive their pay check by Direct Deposit.
- Implemented new agency guidance for the monitoring of FMLA, Fitness for Duty and Leave Without Pay (LWOP) of employees.
- Streamlined the recruiting and hiring processes at Central Office and the Veteran Homes.
- Provided guidance and instituted recruiting plans to fill employee vacancies at the Veterans Homes at Union Grove and King.
- Created various communication tools for employees; catch a coworker doing something right, suggestion boxes at the Veterans Homes, and an employee question mailbox to facilitate timely HR responses to employee questions.
- Provided justification and forwarded a request which resulted in Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) approval for pay increases for the Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and cemetery care workers.
- Conducted a reorganization of the HR and payroll staff at the Veterans Homes resulting in centralized management structure.
- Assisted with all personnel, logistics and IT actions in regard to the move of the Central Office to a new location and building.
- Revised the "Employee Achievement Awards" to include creating the "Years of Service Awards" at Central Office. Accomplished by awarding "pins" for years of service.
- Updated and improved management of the department's open records request program. This was transitioned from BHR to the DA Office.

- Revised and published updated/new policies within the agency; such as vacation, attendance, scheduling, conceal carry, communications, and non-competitive appointment process for disabled veterans and many more.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop and implement a yearly “supervisor training program” within the agency.
- Complete the Lean Government Project regarding the “Employee Orientation Programs” at Central Office and the Veteran Homes.
- Reorganize duties and responsibilities for HR and payroll staff at Central Office and both Veterans Homes.
- Initiate new Lean Government Projects for the forms and policies that currently exist in the agency. Historically we have only been involved with BHR forms.
- Increase efficiencies within Central Office HR; organize offices, train and mentor staff, timely completion of grievances and other HR actions.
- Do a thorough Workers Compensation loss analysis for the agency.
- Complete an assessment of the existing employee safety program.
- Complete an Action Plan to address the deficiencies noted in the assessment described above.
- Provide appropriate training, guidance and assistance pertaining to record management and records retention for supervisors and employees within the agency.
- Coordinate actions with OSER to authorize this agency to conduct its own HR staffing processes.
- Review department employee classifications and duties in order to provide justification for future actions relating to reclassifications and justifications for salary increases.
- Develop and implement a HR centralized electronic system in order to maintain and manage all department position descriptions.

### **Bureau of Information Systems**

The mission of the Bureau of Information Systems (BOIS) is to provide information technology resources in support of the department’s strategic and operational strategies. This IT support includes customer support (Help Desk, web page administration of the internet and intranet, IT training, computer operations and design and maintenance), technical support (network and desktop) and application development support. BOIS provides IT support for network hardware and software, desktop/laptop hardware and software, security, telecommunication equipment and software support. BOIS creates and maintains automated systems or processes the agency uses to support its business programs and to provide service to its customers which, in addition to department staff, includes veterans and their families, County Veteran and Tribal Veteran Service Offices and Veteran Service Organizations.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Creation of an on-line Training and Travel Requests application.
- Implementation of SharePoint for the agency.
- Creation of various labor distribution reports for the Human Resource and Payroll staff.
- Computer upgrades at Central Office to reach 4-year equipment replacement goal.
- Completed implementation of Windows 7 and Microsoft 2010 at all sites.
- Updated several IT policies within the agency.
- Created of an Electronic Record Management Policy.
- Converted from Content Manager to Smart Search content management system.
- Implementation of Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) via Defense Personnel Records Information System (DPRIS) with federal agencies.
- Reduction of base files in support of records retention.
- Implemented of an on-line fax program for the Human Resources, Admissions at the Veterans Homes and Military Funeral Honors.
- Implementation of the cemetery on-line interment scheduling board at the Southern Veterans Cemetery.
- Implementation of the veterans identifier on driver license project with DOT.
- Implementation of the department's public Internet site redesign on SharePoint in coordination with Wisconsin Interactive Network.
- Replacement of King phone system to Voice over IP system.
- Completed Recruitment Tracking application for Human Resources.
- Completed several data conversion and interface projects for State of Wisconsin's migration to PeopleSoft (STAR).
- Completed Military Funeral Honors Stipend processing application.
- Created Grant program case management tool using SmartSearch.
- Required all staff to complete online Cyber Security Awareness training.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Implementation of a 3-year computer upgrade program for the agency.
- Implementation of the department's intranet redesign using SharePoint.
- Implementation of time capture devices at Veterans Homes.
- Evaluate and procure a Staff Scheduling System for the Veterans Homes for 24/7 staff to replace Agency Scheduling.
- Implementation of a system working with the payroll section for an automatic identification and pay of night differentials for nursing staff.
- Assist Museum with OHMS veteran oral history interview project.
- Help implement a cashless system for members at the Veterans Home at King.
- Develop a Cemetery Operations System for all DVA Cemetery sites.

- Create a timekeeping method to capture direct care staff hours to comply with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requirement of Payroll Based Journal quarterly submission requirement for Skilled Nursing Facilities.
- Migrate to new email system.
- Upgrade client computers to Windows 10 and Office 2016 or Office 365.
- Upgrade all computer network infrastructure equipment at Veterans Home at Union Grove.
- Upgrade Channel 900 at King to provide live feed of events available via on-site cable channel and provide digital signage in the Marden Center.
- Expand Virtual Desktop Infrastructure to Veterans Homes at King and Union Grove.
- Upgrade MyWisVets.com Veteran portal.
- Develop a CVSO/TVSO portal for our veterans benefits.
- Upgrade Veterans Benefits Application Tracking System (VBATS).
- Security Camera Expansion project at Veterans Home at King.
- Network infrastructure planning for Moses Hall construction project at Veterans Home at King.

## **OFFICE OF BUDGET, FINANCE AND FACILITIES**

The Office of Budget, Finance and Facilities (OBFF) consists of two bureaus; the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Budget (BPPB) and the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS). They work collaboratively to achieve the department's strategic financial operational responsibilities.

### **Bureau of Policy, Planning and Budget**

The Bureau of Policy, Planning and Budget (BPPB) develops, monitors and manages the department's annual and biennial capital and operating budgets and provides financial, policy and statistical analysis of department programs. BPPB staff monitors and manages all construction and building projects for the department. This includes acting as the project managers for the Department, applying for federal funding and acting as the department liaison with the Department of Administration's (DOA) Division of Facilities Development (DFD). The bureau coordinates operational risk assessments, risk management (liability and property), internal control development and internal audit services. The bureau is responsible for maintaining effective working relationships with the State Budget Office in the Department of Administration, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) and United States Department of Veterans Affairs officials (USDVA). BPPB also coordinates the collection and analysis of demographic data concerning Wisconsin veterans and is responsible for department-wide planning and development of internal policies, administrative procedures, business improvement strategies and the implementation of strategic planning.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Began the construction of a new 200-bed skilled nursing facility at King.
- Removed several buildings (Ove Hall and Burns-Clemens) from the historic preservation list to allow for updated facilities.
- Analyzed the department's current financial software and made improvements to the MFIT financial software.
- Conducted internal audits of department purchasing card usage and CVSO grants.
- Submitted the department budget (including capital budget) in September of 2014.
- Completed a master plan for the King campus
- Appraised the current value of all 88 buildings of the department.
- Completed the Wondering Resident monitoring system at King.
- Upgraded the HVAC and ventilation system at King
- Upgraded the water heating and softening systems at King
- Upgraded the elevators at King
- Upgraded the telephone system at King
- Completed the CBOC renovation at UG
- Completed Phase IV of the SWVMC
- Constructed the Multi-purpose maintenance building at UG
- Upgraded 15 doors at the UG VHRP
- Improved the sidewalks at CF
- Installed new liquid oxygen system at King
- Applied for and received seven home grants, one museum grant, the VORP grant and three cemetery grants

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Complete signage project at King
- Continue to coordinate the construction of a new 200 bed skilled nursing facility at King.
- Remove the cottages at King from the historic preservation list to allow for updated facilities.
- Continue to fine tune the budget staff's capabilities in STAR and monitor the operating budgets of the Department.
- Conduct an internal audit of the x-ray/lab at King.
- Submit the department budget (including capital budget) in September of 2016.
- Complete the three major projects at Chippewa Falls (Bath Heat, Flag pole and Court Yard)
- Complete ADA bath renovations at King
- Continue to submit and monitor grants for federal construction projects.
- Complete Phase 1a of the CWVMC.

- Complete the Heating Plant and generator project at King.
- Complete the canopy project at NWVMC.
- Complete the roofing projects at UG.

### **Bureau of Fiscal Services**

The mission of the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS) is to deliver high levels of financial services for accounts payable, accounts receivable and loan program accounting, as well as maintaining high levels of internal controls, compliance, and review procedures for all WDVA financial operations. Services provided by the bureau include:

- Accounts payable processing (e.g., operating costs, travel vouchers, loan and grant disbursements).
- Accounts receivable and receipts processing.
- Loan accounting, servicing and credit bureau reporting.
- Maintaining MFIT, WDVA's internal budget tracking and expenditure reporting control system.
- Maintenance of internal controls and compliance for fiscal transactions.
- Pre- and post-audit of financial transactions.
- Financial reporting to internal and external customers.
- Contract, purchase order and purchase card oversight.
- Fiscal Services Policies and Procedures.

### **Accomplishments 2013-2015**

- Created a Gifts & Bequest system using SmartSearch for better internal control and tracking of monetary donations while ensuring those donations are spent timely and in accordance to the wishes of the donor.
- Prepare agency for conversion and implementation to a new Official State Accounting System PeopleSoft. This included create a new chart of accounts and updating the agencies organization structure to meet new system requirements
- Adjusted P+ process to ensure all requisitions are reviewed by WDVA Fiscal services staff to ensure compliance with the State Procurement Manual.
- Centralized printing and mailing of purchase orders in purchase plus to ensure that the order and standard terms and conditions were being sent to the vendors. This will ensure WDVA is protected by the standard terms and conditions as well as allowing WDVA to enforces those terms and conditions when needed.
- Phone & utilities checks no longer returned to DVA for mailing. Mailed directly from DOA
- Created new policy regarding purchase of Clothing for DVA staff to ensure compliance with State and Federal regulations.

- Changed cash deposit process at the Museum to ensure compliance with State Accounting Manual Cash Handling. This also reduced cost for bank account, deposit bags and personnel time on making daily bank deposits for this cash.
- Create new policy and manual for pcard to ensure proper review and compliance with the State Procurement and State Accounting manual
- Create new and updated policies for conference and event planning, food and WDVA events, taxable fringe to ensure agency compliance
- Created training PowerPoint's and completed training sessions for Pcard, Procurement 101, WISBuy, & Budget/MFIT throughout WDVA annually.
- Implementation of WISBuy which created staff time efficiencies in ordering off mandatory state contracts, reduced number of PO's being cut and also increased the Pcard rebate by increasing Pcard spend.
- Reduced interest payments on invoices to \$0.00 for biennium
- Created new asset management policy and procedure
- Completed CHAMPS (Centralized Home Asset Management & Procurement) initiative to standardize equipment, reduce storage, improve environment, save money, improve compliance and improve quality.

#### Upcoming Initiatives

- Complete conversion and implementation of the new Official State Accounting System.
- Document roles and responsibilities for all Bureau of Fiscal Services staff to look for efficiencies in staffing and work load.
- Cross train positions to ensure adequate backup of all Fiscal Services duties.
- Complete written step by step procedures for daily processes in the Bureau
- Convert and Implement new PCC system at King and Union Grove home
- Update Intranet for end users so more user friendly
- Create collection policy for agency
- Request Delegation Authority from DVA
- Complete Asset Management changes in new State Accounting System
- Create on-line donation site to try and increase amounts donated to the agency
- Work with DOA to complete updated Internal Control Plan
- Clean up finance folders and outdated documentation/records
- Review supply contract for cost savings
- Review Copier contracts, amount of copies, cost of toner and replacement process to reduce copier cost for the agency.

### **WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM**

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) operates two museums accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Its main facility, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum-Madison (WVMM), is located on the Capitol Square; the Wisconsin Veterans Museum-King (WVMK), is located in the F. A. Marden Memorial building on the grounds of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

#### Programs and Activities:

- Public programs and exhibitions
- Marketing
- Museum research center/archives
- Education
- Retail operations and visitor services
- Collections Management program
- Wisconsin Veterans Museum-King

#### Upcoming Initiatives

- Continue planning of the State Archives Preservation Facility.
- Honor veterans and their roles in shaping our nation's history.
- Close out the observance of the Civil War Sesquicentennial.
- Increase retail net profitability by 10%.
- Operate with financial and staffing efficiency to support the mission of WDVA.
- Increase public program attendance by 10% annually.
- Implement state-wide traveling exhibits program.
- Increase marketing effort to attain greater statewide recognition.

#### **Public Programs and Exhibitions**

Support the Museum's mission by developing educational outreach materials, conceiving and developing exhibits and public programs.

#### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Achieved 19% increase in outreach numbers from FY13 (19,269) to FY15 (22,696).
- Achieved 21% increase in museum attendance from FY13 (94,132) to FY15 (113,546)
- Successful launching of traveling exhibit program – offering two art exhibits and two retractable banner displays.
- Retrofitted the “changing exhibit gallery” with LED lighting – offering greater energy efficiency and less light impact upon artifacts.

- Incorporated touch screens into the 20th Gallery to offer more diverse educational media and oral histories to the public.
- Developed and implemented a WWI Augmented Reality interactive program highlighting aerial gunnery and the experiences of other Wisconsin soldiers in WWI.
- Planned and implemented September 11th Remembrance Ceremonies.
- Planned and implemented the 60th anniversary commemorative program ‘Korea Remembered.’
- Retrieved, conserved, and installed Charles A. Kuchler art display within WVM Madison and installed a reproduction at F. A. Marden Memorial Building – King.
- Planned and implemented the WWII 70th anniversary program commemorating the USS Wisconsin’s launch.
- Planned and implemented the Vietnam 50th anniversary commemorative program ‘Operation Dustoff: Vietnam Remembered.’
- Installed Medal of Honor exhibit at WVM – Madison.
- Planned and implemented the WWII 70th anniversary commemorative program ‘D-Day+70’ event in the Capitol.
- Planned and implemented ‘Salute to Veterans History – Veterans Day’ partnership program with WVM.
- Planned and implemented ‘Eagles on the Square: 150th Celebration of Old Abe’s Return Home’ program on the Capitol Square.
- Installed WAR:RAW exhibit.
- Collaborated with Artists for the Humanities on the ground breaking PTSD/TBI exhibit at WVM – Madison.
- Renovated the War on Terror permanent exhibit at WVM – Madison, updating the conflict’s history and continuing the museum’s exhibitions to current day.
- Multiple partnerships including Distinguished Lecture Series with UW Madison’s History Department offering 2 lectures every spring and fall, Wisconsin Historical Society Press book talks each season, and special Wisconsin Public Television preview screenings (“Last Days in Vietnam”).
- Installed MOH exhibit.
- Completed VEP for New Museum Project.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Plan and implement the ‘Return to Camp Randall – Civil War Encampment and Monument Dedication’ to officially close the State’s Sesquicentennial Commemorations.
- Recognizing the Hmong: The Secret War in Laos’ exhibit addition and touchscreen program.
- Incorporation of the Wisconsin Hmong veterans’ story to the permanent Vietnam exhibit at WVM – Madison, including an exhibit video showcasing oral histories collected by WVM.

- Continue to build traveling exhibits offerings.
- Design, implement and install 2 WWI Centennial exhibitions: The Art of Persuasion, From the Front.
- Host the W. Britain Military History Symposium.
- Plan a WWI Centennial Military History Symposium in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin –Madison History Department.
- Establish Wisconsin’s WWI Centennial Commission and associated activities.

## Marketing

Support the museum and its programs by increasing the positive public perception of the WVVM and the WDVA. Develops and maintains the museum's public identity and brand profile by supporting the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's vision to be regarded as the leading interpreter of the Wisconsin veteran experience through marketing initiatives focused on statewide awareness, museum and program attendance, and digital strategy implementation.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Launched marketing campaigns with Laughlin Constable FY14 & FY15
- Managed Laughlin Constable FY14 marketing budget (\$100,000) with campaign initiatives focused on general awareness of museum with target audience in the Fox Valley, Green Bay and Appleton area.
- Development of brand profile and brand brief
- Research/planning dedicated to driving awareness of museum
- Established and executed public relations efforts of campaign
- Implemented Social Media Strategy
- Creative execution of (3) :30 second radio spots and (4) billboards
- Marketing promotion and PR for 17 events
- Published (4) editions of The Bugle, WVM Quarterly Publication
- Managed Laughlin Constable FY15 marketing budget (\$162,200) with campaign initiatives focused on general awareness of museum of museum location and opening of PTSD exhibit with target audience in the Milwaukee area.
- Public relations and media management
- Launched social media (FaceBook) advertisement to increase growth in community size and page engagement/reach, with geo-targeted group in Wisconsin, Chicago +50 mile radius
- Creative execution of print, out of home messaging, broadcast, online, exterior banners posters.
- Launched marketing campaign from (May 4 to June 27) for new temporary exhibit WAR:RAW Healing Military Trauma Through Expressive Art. Resulting in website traffic increase 7.62% over the 55-day period and new visitor increased by 8.95%. Cost per click was better than the estimated amount at \$3.88 CPC on an estimated \$5.00. Ad position was 1.4 overall, falling in the desired first position on the search page.
- Marketing promotion and PR for 22 events with emphasis on Wisconsin's Vietnam War Commemoration events at the WVM
- Published (4) editions of The Bugle, WVM Quarterly Publication
- Increased website visits 7% from FY14 (73,326) to FY15 (78,591)
- Increased Facebook reach 542% from FY14 (210,490) FY15 (1,351,462)
- Produced traveling exhibit brochure.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Development and implementation with Laughlin Constable of digital campaign for The Return to Camp Randall event.
- Creative execution of campaign banners (Red Cloud & Edward DeNomie) and collateral.
- Continued promotion of Wisconsin's Vietnam War Commemoration events at the WVM.
- Begin development of WWI Commission material

### Museum Research Center/Archives

Support the WVM and its mission by acquiring, processing, safeguarding, and making available to the public archival materials relevant to Wisconsin veterans.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Expanded the Veterans Oral History Program to over 2,000 interviews.
- Digitized over 160 World War I posters and prints in preparation for The Art of Persuasion: Mobilizing the Masses in WWI exhibit.
- Finalized plans to move unprocessed manuscripts, oversized materials, and serials to the new State Archives Preservation Facility.
- Successfully handled almost 4,000 reference requests from around the country and the world.
- Redeveloped and trained Oral History interviewers throughout the state.
- Hired FTE Oral Historian.

### Upcoming Initiatives

- Launch online WWI veterans database in Spring 2017
- Complete digitization of over 1,700 Civil War photographs through IMLS Grant.
- Digitize and make available online identified portions of the World War I photo collection.
- Integrate oral history records into online PastPerfect Database.
- Develop long-range digitization and storage protocols for oral history and archival collections.

### Education

In support of the museum's mission, promote lifelong learning through innovative public programs, exhibit-related support, and outreach activities.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Developed STEM-based educational offerings and incorporated relevant STEM-based labels in the permanent exhibit galleries.
- Established teacher's advisory committee.
- In conjunction with UW-Madison, developed digital CW medical app.

### Future Initiatives

- Grow WVMM audience through new broad-based educational offerings
- Continue to develop new and existing collaborative relationships with external organizations and community partners.
- Revitalize staff and volunteer base through recruitment, training opportunities, and morale-building events.
- Improve consistency of quality in programs by implementing regular and consistent evaluation processes.

### **Store Operations and Visitor Services**

The retail store provides visitors with point of contact service and retail merchandise.

### Accomplishments 2013-2015

- Posted two consecutive years of profitable Store Operations in FY14 and FY15 for the first time in nearly ten years.
- Increased the net sales of the Museum Gift Store by 38% from FY14 (\$85,058) to FY15 (\$116,860).
- Increased the net sales of the Online Operations by 5% from FY14 (\$3111) to FY15 (\$3250).
- Redeveloped the layout and presentation of Museum Gift Store and Lobby through use of new, more efficient fixtures, Veterans Mural, LED Lights, and new flooring.
- Completed Point of Sale system upgrade to CounterPoint SQL offering improved register and inventory controls.
- Introduced successful new product lines such as Schott, Cobi and Museum specific lines such as WI Vintage apparel and Nicholas Schmidt denim reproductions of vintage coats.
- Successfully completed offsite seminar and onsite webinar training through Museum Store Association and other organizations to improve product offering, store operations and knowledge of Store staff.
- Partnered with other local businesses such as Wisconsin Historical Museum Gift Store in order to improve sales.
- Attended Retail Buyers Trade Shows to identify new vendors suitable for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Gift Store.

## **Collections Management Program**

Collections management provides primary support by ensuring the accessibility, safety and preservation of the artifact collections.

### *Accomplishments 2013-2015*

- Completed inventory of 24, 225 museum objects in the permanent collection (began January 2013 and completed September 2014)
- Added and processed 542 new objects to the collection
- Completed comprehensive deaccession of 121 objects outside of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum collecting scope to make room for new, relevant collections (May 2015)
- Completed safety assessment of 115 pieces of Civil War ordnance (December 2013)
- Added over 2000 inventoried objects to the museum's Study Collection for educational and exhibit purposes, all of which are now photographed and searchable within the museum's database (began August 2014)
- Completed inventory, photography and database entry for 137 objects at Union Grove (April 2014)
- Completed inventory, packing and return of approximately 880 objects in the storage area and on exhibit at King in preparation for new exhibit space (2014-2015)

### *Upcoming Initiatives*

- Continued emphasis will be placed on developing Online Operations to improve sales.
- Continue to attend Buyer and Retail Seminars in order to learn more effective Museum Store practices and identify vendors that would be beneficial to work with in the Gift Store to increase profile and profits.
- Continue to identify and order new products from vendors that support the goals of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and improve the overall profitability of the Gift Store.
- Update the displays and fixtures in the Gift Store to further create more sales space while offering a better way to shop in the Store.
- Collaborate with WVM Marketing to improve Store message to the public to increase overall sales.
- Continue to develop product lines based upon Collections of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.
- Continue partnerships with companies such as W. Britain to improve exposure and sales, and identify companies for future partnerships.
- Continue to improve the customer service of the WVM Gift Store through training and improving staff knowledge of product and Museum events.

### **Wisconsin National Guard Museum**

After a careful and thorough review of operations, the WDVA returned control of the Wisconsin National Guard Museum to the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs at the close of FY13. The challenges of maintaining supervisory integrity and administrative oversight from Madison over a long distance compelled the action.