

WDVA

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

**BIENNIAL
REPORT
2019**

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Organizational Overview

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

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 veteran 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.

In 1945, the Legislature created the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) under Chapter 580 to administer state veterans programs and to ensure the state's veterans receive the state and federal benefits to which they are entitled. 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.

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

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

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

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

Office of the Secretary

WDVA is headed by a Secretary appointed by the Governor. The Secretary administers the department through the deputy secretary, assistant deputy secretary, and division administrators. Working with external stakeholders, the Secretary provides the vision to enable the department to establish long-range strategies, plan for the future, and achieve its mission.

The Office of the Secretary is comprised of the executive team, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Office of Legal Counsel.

- 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.
- The **Assistant Deputy Secretary** is the primary contact for inter-governmental agency functions, serves as the agency legislative liaison, and oversees the department's rulemaking activities.
- The **Office of Legal Counsel** provides legal advice to the department, supervises litigation matters, and coordinates external litigation involving the department's legal affairs.
- The **Office of Public Affairs** is responsible for the department's internal and external information activities and media relations, developing and implementing communications and public relations strategies, planning statewide public events, and brand management.

Affiliated Board and Council

The Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs is a nine-member, part-time, citizen board that advises the department.¹ Board members are veterans appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for staggered four-year terms.

The Council on Veterans Programs is composed of representatives from twenty-six organizations that affiliate with and advocate for veterans' issues.² The Council advises the Board of Veterans Affairs and the department on solutions and policy alternatives relating to veterans' issues.

Initiatives for 2019-21

- 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.
- Construction of John R. Moses Hall, a state-of-the-art 192-bed skilled nursing facility at the Veterans Home at King.
- Establish a long-term plan for the future of veterans homes throughout the state.
- Provide additional staffing for the Wisconsin Veterans Homes to adjust to the changing demographics that include higher ages with needs for more medical attention.
- Decrease overall overtime and temporary employment agency staffing levels at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes.
- Continue to provide top-quality care to all members at the Department's skill nursing facilities.

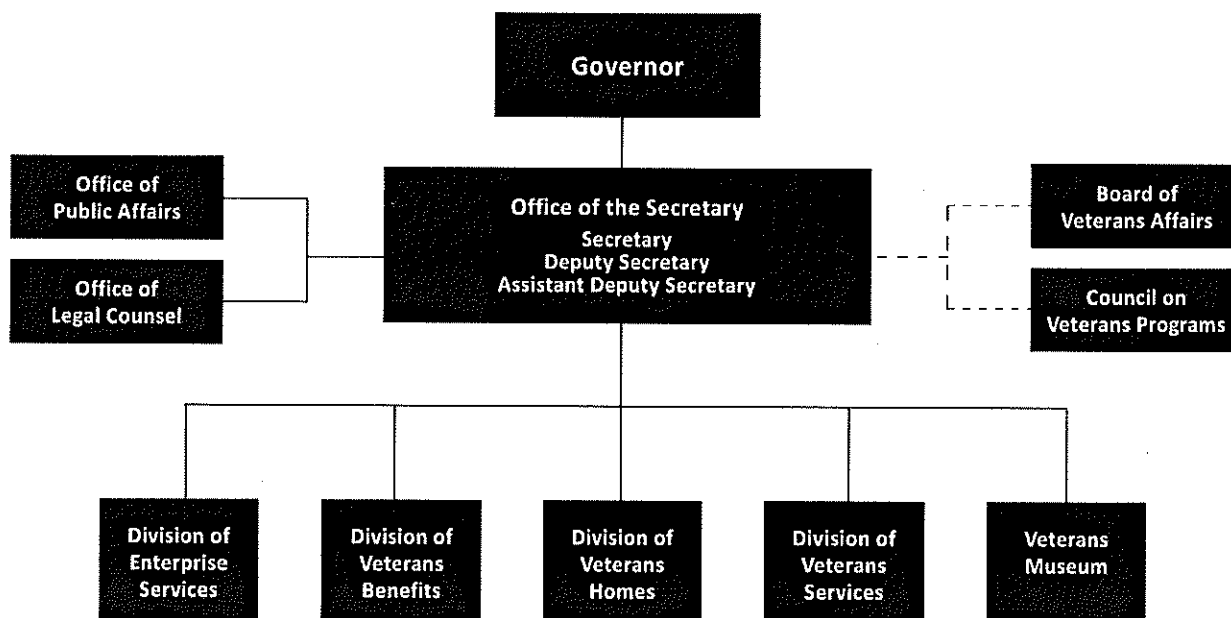
¹ <https://dva.wi.gov/Pages/aboutWdva/BoardofVeteransAffairs.aspx>

² <https://dva.wi.gov/Pages/aboutWdva/CouncilonVeteransPrograms.aspx>

Organizational Chart



Wisconsin Department
of Veterans Affairs



Division Summaries, Accomplishments, and Initiatives for 2017-19

DIVISION OF VETERANS BENEFITS

The Division of Veterans Benefits administers benefits, programs, and services that assist Wisconsin veterans by providing education assistance to expand employment opportunities, transportation to USDVA medical appointments, access to health care services not provided by the USDVA, and subsistence assistance in emergency situations. The division also maintains responsibility for the department’s Military Funeral Honors program and the three state veterans cemeteries, located in Spooner, King, and Union Grove.

The Division is divided into two bureaus: the Bureau of Veterans Benefits and the Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services.

Bureau of Veterans Benefits

The Bureau of Veterans Benefits consists of the Grants Unit, Eligibility Unit, and the Veterans Benefits Resource Center (VBRC).

Veterans Assistance Section

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

The Grants Unit 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, nonprofit organizations, and employers.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Grants to Local Governments** – Provides 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 state-operated veterans nursing homes.
- **Grants to Nonprofit Organizations** – Provides funding of up to \$250,000 for grants to nonprofit organizations who provide financial assistance or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families. WDVA also provides funding of up to \$400,000 for grants to nonprofits that provide entrepreneurship training, technical or business assistance, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes.
- **Grants to Employers** – Provides funding of up to \$100,000 to employers who hire veterans with a federal service-connected disability rating of at least 50 percent.

Total Veterans Trust Fund Benefits and Services Disbursed
July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2019³

Grant Program	Number Awarded	Amount
Veterans Retraining Grant	39	\$104,026
Assistance to Needy Veterans	853	\$458,674
Veterans Education Grant	123	\$307,398
CVSO Grant	213	\$2,151,034
TVSO Grant	17	301,101
VSO Grant	90	\$820,000
Transportation Grants	12	\$781,368
Employment Grant	29	\$80,578
Nonprofit Grant	64	\$750,000
Entrepreneurship Grant	18	\$1,200,000
Municipalities Grant	9	\$300,000
Totals	1,467	\$7,254,179

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 veterans' requests and enable quality improvement efforts to be based on data.

- The data collected revealed the top four reasons that veterans contacted the VBRC were for assistance relating to the driver license veteran identifier, MyWisVets self-service portal, property tax credit, and miscellaneous federal benefit programs. The top four service periods for veterans making contact with the VBRC were Vietnam, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. The majority of contacts made to VBRC were done through the phone or online chat.

Accomplishments FY 2017 - 2019:

- Issued 219 Veteran-Owned Business Certifications to increase the opportunity for disabled veteran firms to sell their products and services to the state of Wisconsin.
- Processed 54,710 applications for benefits, with an annual average increase of 1000 applications.
- VBRC handled: 94,693 incoming calls; 16,203 chats; returned calls to 6,078 voicemails from CCA; responded to 1,243 email inquiries.
- VBRC received 1,032 survey responses and achieved a 97.45% satisfaction rating. (Indicate the goal/reason for the survey)
- MyWisVets saw an increase of 17,177 registered users, averaging 5,725 new users per year. This was an increase of 220% from the end of FY 2016.

³ Data source: VBATS

- Attended and presented at seven Wisconsin Department of Corrections facilities for the Incarcerated Veterans Program.
- Converted to electronic certification notification system for WI G.I. Bill certifications for all Wisconsin Technical College System campuses and for all 13 of the 4-year institutions of the University of Wisconsin System, resulting in elimination of approximately 20 personnel hours per week, savings related to mailing and supplies, and increased protection of veterans personal information.
- Reduced the application processing time from 3.2 weeks to 1 day.
- Sent informational packets regarding state and federal benefits, programs, services, and employment resources to 3,870 recently separated military veterans.
- Worked with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and Department of Children and Families to implement the Hire Heroes Program.
- Developed new eligibility guidance related to uncharacterized discharges and conducted review of determinations made in the previous 12 months, resulting in the reversal of 3 previous denials of eligibility.
- Implemented changes to the MyWisVets application portal to enable submission of Wisconsin GI Bill applications for dependents and applications for Cemetery pre-registration, and added features related to the Veteran Employment and Assistance to Needy Veterans grants.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Redesign of MyWisVets application portal to modernize and improve the user experience in order to improve utilization of benefits.
- Redesign VBATS system to consolidate to one system for WDVA staff and CVSOs across the state.

Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services

The Bureau of Cemeteries and Memorial Services manages three state veterans' cemeteries: Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (NWVMC) at Spooner, Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (CWVMC) at King, and Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) at Union Grove, the fifth busiest state veterans cemetery in the nation with 1,100 interments per year. To date, the three cemeteries combined have interred 30,136 veterans, spouses, and dependents and pre-registered 19,197 requests for interment, of which 30.3 percent have been interred.

The Bureau also administers the Military Funeral Honors Program, which 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 FY 2017 - 2019:

- Performed 21,877 Military Funeral Honors services.
- Coordinated honors for 15,728 military funerals.
- Paid \$995,500 in stipends, representing 20,255 disbursements, directly to veteran service organizations for their service rendering military funeral honors.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Headstones and markers in the Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery will be relabeled and recorded properly in the federal system.

DIVISION OF VETERANS HOMES

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

The Veterans Home at King provides skilled nursing services for up to 721 members. The Veterans Home at Union Grove provides skilled nursing services for up to 158 members and is licensed to serve up to 40 members at the assisted living level of care. The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls provides skilled nursing services for up to 72 members. The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls is unique from the other homes in that the WDVA contracts the operations of the facility to a private healthcare provider.

Upcoming Initiatives for all Homes:

- Continue streamlining maintenance services.
- Implement more efficient staffing models and staff management.
- Create master plan for statewide distribution of USDVA-allocated beds.
- Implement marketing plan specifically for the Veterans Homes to improve outreach to eligible veterans, spouses, and parents.

Wisconsin Veterans Home at King

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

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

In addition to skilled nursing, dietary, maintenance, and housekeeping, King provides the following services:

- Physician, Dentist, and Pharmacy
- Physical therapy/occupational therapy/speech therapy/work therapy
- Social Services and Ministerial support
- Laboratory/X-ray
- Medical and recreational transport
- Group and individualized one-on-one activities
- Marden Center (bowling, theater, coffee shop, fitness room, wood shop, library, computer center and commissary)
- Boating/fishing
- Barber/beautician
- Security/fire protection
- Laundry

Accomplishments 2017-2019:

- Completed compliance with federal “Mega Rule” phase 2 effective November 2017.⁴
- 319 volunteers contributed over 19,000 hours.

Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove

The Veterans Home at Union Grove is located on the campus of the Southern Wisconsin Center (SWC). The Veterans Home at Union Grove includes a 40-bed assisted living facility (Fairchild Hall) and a 158-bed skilled nursing facility (Boland Hall).

Boland Hall offers the following services:

- Skilled nursing care, memory care, and hospice
- Physical, occupational, and speech therapy
- Visits by physicians and nurse practitioners
- Dental, podiatry, and social work services
- Activities
- Family Support Group

Fairchild Hall is a Community-Based Residential Facility (CBRF) that provides the following services:

- Assisted living, memory care, and nursing and social work services
- Medication management
- Transportation to off-site medical services

The activity center in Maurer Hall includes ceramics, woodworking shop, leather crafts, a library, and a computer center.

Accomplishments 2017-2019:

- Maintained average skilled nursing census of 156 (98.33%) over past 12 months, with 36 members classified with a service-connected disability.
- 220 volunteers contributed 11,499 hours.

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 facility with 72 beds.

Accomplishments 2017 – 2019:

- Received a “Best Nursing Homes” rating by the U.S. News and World Report.

⁴ See Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), 42 CFR Parts 405, 431, 447, 482, 483, 485, 488, and 489, *Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Reform of Requirements for Long-Term Care Facilities* (81 FR 68688).

- Maintained an average census of 71.2 (98.9%) over the past 12 months, with 28 members classified with a service-connected disability.
- My InnerView satisfaction scores were 92% for member satisfaction and 97% for family satisfaction.

DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES

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.

Bureau of Claims

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

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Processed over 2,000 veterans' claims.
- Provide services on a walk-in basis to an average of 340 veterans per month, in addition to veterans' scheduled claims appointments.
- Increased community outreach including home visits to veterans and a partnership with Horizon Hospice, supporting veterans and their families involved with the hospice process.

Bureau of Programs and Services

The Bureau Programs and Services consists of the State Approving Agency (SAA), Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP), Incarcerated Veterans Program (IVP), and the Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP).

SAA

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

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Earned a "Satisfactory" rating from the Joint Peer Review Group for both FY 2018 and 2019. Satisfactory is the highest rating available.
- Completed 35 assigned compliance surveys in each of the federal fiscal years 2018 and 2019.
- Successfully implemented and updated the veterans On-the-Job Training and apprentice programs which had previously been administered by the Department of Workforce development.

- Successfully completed a 100% review of all state public and private not-for-profit colleges and universities.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Continue to refine the program approval process such that all SAA approved programs are updated at least once every two years.
- Continue to work with USDVA to identify and target for review those Wisconsin schools that are at-risk for incorrectly certifying veteran students for federal veterans education benefits. This data-driven program aims to target historically troubled programs (e.g. flight training) for scrutiny to ensure veterans are being served promptly and according to the regulations.

Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP)

The VHRP is a federal grant program designed for homeless veterans and those who are at-risk of becoming homeless. The programs offer stable, secure, and safe housing to veterans while they receive training and services necessary for becoming self-supporting.

These programs were originally located at three different locations within the state; Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove with a total of 86 beds for veterans. A Green Bay location opened in 2018.

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Secured continued funding for the Chippewa Falls, King and Union Grove sites, including beds for both Service Intensive Transitional Housing (SITH) and Clinical Treatment (CT) models.
- Secured funding to add a new site with the SITH and CT models in Green Bay.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Applying for the next round of federal funding for FFY 2021 - 2023.

Veterans Outreach and Recovery (VORP)

The VORP was developed from a federal grant program covering 49 rural counties, into a statewide pilot program serving all 72 counties. VORP provides mental health and substance abuse assistance for homeless, chronic, and at-risk of homeless veterans through comprehensive case management in a recovery track. In order to assist more veterans, VORP also includes a referral track with supportive case management for veterans with needs. Case managers in the field locate veterans to provide appropriate needed services. The success in serving veterans under the VORP pilot program led to stabilization of positions and funding under 2019 Act 9.

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Connected 900 veterans to a variety of services.
- More than 4,000 services have been provided to veterans under the program.
- Participated in various mental health events sponsored by the USDVA and other organizations.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Apply lessons learned from the pilot to the permanent program, to determine opportunities for additional improvements following stabilization of the program.
- Hire permanent staff for the program in FY '19.
- Increase use of Motivational Interviewing techniques by VORP staff.

DIVISION OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES

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

Bureau of Information Systems

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

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Planned and executed IT Central Office move to Department of Revenue building.
- Wireless network upgrade at Central Office, Museum, and the Veterans Homes at King, Union Grove and Chippewa Falls.
- Migrated to Enterprise Email system and began upgrades to Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 upgrades to client computers.
- Installed IT equipment in Wisconsin Veterans Museum/Wisconsin Historical Society State Archives Preservation Facility when construction was finished.
- Implemented a 4-year computer upgrade program for the agency.
- Implemented several IT and security projects at the Veterans Homes.
- Implemented several website and application enhancements to include the Public Records Request application, public comment document, public online lookup, MyWisVets portal, and the application to process and track internments at Veteran Memorial Cemeteries.
- Developed and upgraded applications to share and utilize documentation through SmartSearch as one of the sub-projects of the VBATS Redesign: VBATS, MyWisVets, CemNet, and Military Funeral Honors.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Implement Indeavor Workcloud staff scheduling system and biometric time clock devices at the Veterans Homes.
- Implement or expand Virtual Desktop Infrastructure at Veterans Homes and select Central Office staff, and upgrade SQL Servers and implement encryption for data.
- Implement a consolidated DVA IT Helpdesk.
- Design and perform updates to several web-based applications.

Bureau of Budget, Policy and Facilities (BBPF)

The BBPF develops, monitors, and manages the department's annual and biennial capital and operating budgets and provides financial, policy, and statistical analysis of department programs. BBPF staff monitors and manages all construction and building projects for the department. The bureau coordinates operational risk assessments, risk management (liability and property), internal control development, and internal audit

services. BPPB also coordinates the collection and analysis of demographic data concerning Wisconsin veterans.

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Coordinated the construction of a new 192-bed skilled nursing facility at King and completed major upgrade projects at all Veterans Homes and Cemeteries.
- Continued to submit and monitor grants for fourteen (14) federal construction projects.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Oversee the demolition of the cottages at King and monitor other projects at the Veterans Homes.
- Apply for federal funding for the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program (VHRP).

Bureau of Fiscal Services

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

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Sold mortgage loan portfolio to WHEDA for approximately \$20M and paid off remaining mortgage bonds of \$28M, enabling the department to maintain a balance in the fund, which had incurred an annual loss of approximately \$250K.
- Developed and implemented electronic asset management form and updated the department's Asset Management Policy to improve asset management of non-capital assets and inventory.
- Completed agency wide training for Procurement, Asset Management, Purchasing Cards, WISBuy, Accounts Payable, ChartFields, Query and Reporting.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Continue to review Bureau of Fiscal Services staff workload and duties to achieve increased efficiencies.
- Complete internal audits to ensure regulatory compliance related to purchase card (Pcard) use, travel expenses, and accounts payable.
- Complete copier project to increase security while reducing cost for the agency.
- Review personal loan accounts for charge-off and uncollectible loans, reducing the size of the loan database.

WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

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

The 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 is Smithsonian-affiliated. The museum also coordinates several traveling exhibits throughout the state.

Accomplishments 2017 - 2019:

- Achieved 22% increase in outreach numbers from FY 2017 (198,426) to FY 2019 (242,139).
- Achieved 17% increase in museum attendance from FY 2017 (95502) to FY 2019 (111,378).
- Opened the new exhibit, *Every Veteran is a Story*, at the Marsden Center at Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.
- Designed and installed exhibit, *In My Spare Moments: The Art of Harold F. Schmitz*, which highlights the artwork of service member and Milwaukee native Harold Schmitz in the South Pacific during World War II. Exhibit features larger than life reproductions of his art, as well as the original art, an oral history, photographs from his time in the South Pacific, and hands-on activity.
- Completed relocation of 26,000 artifacts and 4392 cu. ft. of archives to new State Archives Preservation Facility [SAPF] in October 2018.
- Completed move of processed and unprocessed manuscript collections to the new SAPF.
- Successfully handled over 5,000 reference requests from around the country and the world.
- Increased the gross sales of the Museum Store by 7% from end of FY 2017 biennium (\$112,956) to end of FY 2019 (\$120,714).
- Completed redesign of museum and store websites to include mobile responsiveness allowing the public to have a digital experience on any mobile platform.

Upcoming Initiatives:

- Continue examination and assessment of future needs related to location of Wisconsin Veterans Museum.
- Focus on building partnerships and making connections with local and state organizations, minority groups, and outreach to rural areas to assist with new collecting and exhibit strategies to gather diverse stories and collections to support those stories.
- Develop new exhibit featuring the universality of service members' souvenirs in 2020 and develop a 3-5 year plan for additional upcoming exhibits.
- Launch a collecting initiative to examine what collections areas WVM is lacking in and creating relationships to bring in under-represented service members in groups such as women, LGBTQ+, people of color, smaller communities in rural Wisconsin, etc.
- Study store feasibility as a visitor amenity, archival pay portal and determine its role and function within the museum with an eye to better profitability and fiscal security.