



Providing quality, innovative, and cost-effective services that safeguard and enhance well-being.

2024 QUARTER 4 | VETERAN SERVICES

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<i>Customers Served</i> <i>(from Vetra Spec Database)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1735 appointments (9% increase, all-time high) • 509 claims for benefits (12% increase, all-time high) • 4380 phone calls with Vets/agencies/etc (5% increase) • 2490 emails with Vets/agencies/etc (2% increase) • 53 gas/food cards awarded to Vets (40% increase) • 132 hours of professional certification training (no change) • 8,600 flags placed on Veterans graves (no change) • 98% customer satisfaction rate based on surveys (no change)
<i>Transported to Mpls VA Medical Center</i>	82 veterans were transported to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. Van operates 1 - day per week (Tuesday) service.
<i>Presentations/Public Events</i>	15 presentations to local organizations and attendance at public events.
<i>Social Media Presence - Communicate with Veterans</i>	68 social media postings/articles. 807 Followers on Facebook
<i>Department Staff (100%)</i>	Eric Killen, Adam Kohls, Angela Deutschlander, Beth Risen, David Lance (Intern)

SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Customer levels - the total number of office visits and support to veterans has returned to and is exceeding pre-COVID levels.
- Outreach to the Augusta Senior Center for onsite claims continues monthly.
- Held Benefits Fair - The first annual Veterans Benefits Fair was held at the National Guard Armory with 41 vendors and a total of 340 veterans that attended. Planning for a mini fair in the spring and another large fair is already in the planning phases.
- Dental Partnership with CVTC for Dental service for Veterans is underway - 10 Veterans have received treatments, and we have spent approximately \$2,500.
- College intern is working 2-days a week and is making a positive impact with the department and Veterans community.
- Marketing - spending the remainder of 2023 WDVA ARPA funds (\$8K) for marketing and advertising to include 3 months radio ads and interview on John Murphy show.
- Volunteer recruiting - ongoing recruiting to fill the need for additional volunteer drivers for the DAV van.

ISSUES ON THE HORIZON AND SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

We are capturing the lessons learned from the Veterans Benefits Fair and starting the planning process for a mini-fair in Augusta in the Spring.

Vet Center Mental Health Counseling continues to expand - 3-4 veterans receive individual counseling each week and a peer support group meets bi-weekly that averages 7 Veterans.

Continuing to gather data with the Chippewa Valley Veterans Survey that will assist us in understanding the local Veterans community.

Our Core Behaviors:

Proactive Ownership | Infinite Possibilities | Customer First | Stronger Together | Ardent Learners | Unwavering Respect

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (GREEN / AMBER / RED)

Strategic Initiative: Identify opportunities to strengthen partnerships and collaboration.

- Dental program in partnership with CVTC to assist Veterans in maintaining dental health. Status: Green
- Veterans Benefits Fair in collaboration with Chippewa county and numerous external agencies: Green
- Monthly presentations with community groups to improve engagement on Veterans issues. Status: Green
- Lead/facilitate 2 collaboration meetings w/ partner agencies that focus on assisting Veterans. Status: Amber
- Engage state legislators and communicate ECC and Veterans issues as a WCA Ambassador. Status: Red
- Large scale Veterans Survey to understand the community. Amber
- Planning for mini-Veterans Benefits Fair in Augusta – Spring 2025. Amber
- Customer feedback surveys to ensure Veterans are satisfied with the services received. Status: Green

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (GREEN / AMBER / RED) Cont...

Strategic Initiative: Enhance equity and access in service delivery and representation in governance.

Key Initiative: Departments push out to rural areas/offsite locations. Set up shop in rural underserved areas.

- Improve service to underserved rural communities with offsite locations (August Senior Center) Status: Green

Strategic Initiative: Increase information and marketing of county services and programs.

Key Initiative: Dedicate more resources towards communication and marketing plan.

- Obtained an ARPA grant from the state in the amount of \$19,178 and utilized half in 2023 for marketing: Radio ads, billboards, brochures, business cards, hats, glasses, jackets. The remainder will be used in fiscal year 2024. Status: Green
- Post weekly on Facebook current information that is relevant and informative to Veterans community. Status: Green

Strategic Initiative: Enhance employee engagement and resilience.

Key Initiative: Working from home (county staff) and offering a flexible schedule where possible.

- We maintain flexible hybrid hours of being in the office and working from home to meet the needs of our Veterans allowing them access to information and assistance. Status: Green

Strategic Initiative: Individualize mental health services to vulnerable populations.

Key Initiative: Create peer to peer mental health support groups.

Key Initiative: Resources and collaboration to support initiatives for mental health.

- On site Vet Center counselor has increased to three days a month and a mental health support group for Veterans was started in 2023. Status: Amber.

GOALS FOR NEXT QUARTER

Complete the plan to conduct a mini-Veterans benefits fair at the Augusta Senior Center.

Update Strategic plan and capture lessons learned for Fair (Smart Book).

Participate as a Dept in the "Trunk or Treat" Halloween event.

Continue to gather respondents' data from the survey on Chippewa Valley Veterans that will assist in determining focus and resources.

Purchase additional gas and food cards.

Purchase additional marketing items.

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