



Monterey County

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Board Report

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Receive an oral report from the Department of Social Services / Military & Veterans Affairs Office regarding County efforts and opportunities to strengthen Veteran services throughout the County.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Receive an oral report from the Department of Social Services / Military & Veterans Affairs Office regarding County efforts and opportunities to strengthen Veteran services throughout the County.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Military & Veterans Affairs Office (MVAO) has experienced major increases in general and compensation/pension claim assistance activity year-over-year. With the addition of the California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery as well as the Major General Gourley VA- DoD Outpatient Clinic in Marina, more requests for services have come through the MVAO offices. In addition, MVAO has fostered relationships with the Presidio of Monterey and Naval Postgraduate School to be an intricate part of the Transition Assistance Programs (TAPS) providing vital information on benefits and entitlements to service members that are set to be released from active duty within 6 months. Although these individuals are not classified as veterans until their discharge date, the VA will allow a benefits delivery at discharge (BDD) claim to be filed.

There are currently more than 50,000 veterans, spouses and dependents in Monterey County. There are between 1,000 +/- individuals that attend the Transition Assistance Programs per year with nearly 100% seeking some form of benefit assistance. The County hosts thousands of Active and Reserve Military Members.

There has been a steady increase of a variety of claims being filed; that range from compensation, pension, education, burial, surviving spouse and dependent benefits. In addition to standard claims, MVAO assists in claims for increases and secondary conditions as well as representing clients in appeals with the Board of Veterans Appeals and Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. In addition, the MVAO works with all County Departments with regard to employee / Reservists and National Guard Members who are called to active duty as well as Veteran Hiring Initiatives to include the County Veterans Preference Policy.

During the July 1st, 2018 to December 31st, 2018 period, the MVAO has established an appointment system, customer survey and quarterly newsletter. The average time for an appointment is 2 to 3 weeks and there has been an average of 50+/- daily phone and in-person customer interactions daily. The MVAO has processed more than 300 tuition fee waivers for Veteran Dependents to go to State Colleges and Universities tuition free. Over the past 6 months the MVAO has recovered \$1.6m in retroactive Compensation and Pension pay that results in an of \$230,000 new monthly awards - that is new money generated for the county of \$2.8m annually. This brings the total of Compensation and Pension awards to over \$100m per year.

Opportunities to strengthen Veteran services throughout the County include enhancing services to:

- a) Homeless Veterans
- b) Housebound / Hospice Veterans
- c) Underserved Areas of the County
- d) Presidio of Monterey & Naval Post Graduate School Transition Assistant Program-Onsite Claim Processing
- e) High School Partnership - Veteran Dependent Tuition Fee Waiver for CSU, UC and Community College
- f) County Jail / Prison Veteran Parole Coordination
- g) Probation Department Collaboration - Veterans and Dependents

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

There is no other pertinent agency involvement at this time.

FINANCING:

There is no impact to the County General Fund with receipt of this update.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This presentation is an effort to increase cross departmental and public awareness of the Military and Veterans Affairs office roles functions and responsibilities.

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Attachment: PowerPoint Presentation

Attachments on file with the Clerk of the Board