



Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs



ANNUAL REPORT Fiscal Year 2023



From the Director

This has been a remarkable and humbling year. It remains an honor to work with a dedicated staff who shares the mission of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA): to Support, Serve and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community. The work they do and the way they tackle challenges is admirable and IDVA's customers speak highly of the organization.

This year, significant changes took place within the organization. We bid farewell to a leader at the Veterans Home who was instrumental in guiding us through the challenging times of COVID-19. With every goodbye comes a new beginning. IDVA welcomed a new leader of the Veterans Home, and we are excited to see how the home thrives under her guidance.

Last year, IDVA worked with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a strategic plan for the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families. This year, Governor Eric Holcomb approached the legislature to fund the challenge and attack Veteran Suicide across the state.

IDVA also increased access to the Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) and introduced the MFRF Holiday Program, resulting in an increase in applications and funds distributed. The team is looking forward to the new MFRF Back to School Program that will begin later this summer.

IDVA is committed to continuing to find new and better ways to Support, Serve, and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community and expand our programs and reach across the State through our operations and key partners.



IDVA Director Dennis Wimer and the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough



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Mission

The mission of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is to Support, Serve and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community.

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Vision

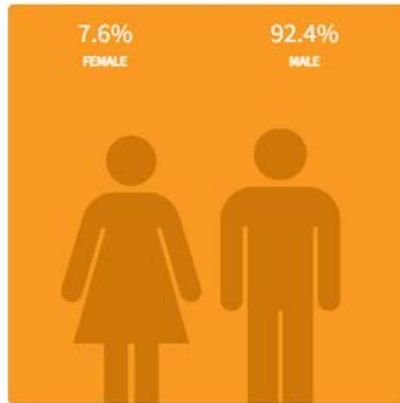
Indiana is the choice for Veterans to Live, Work and Thrive.

Indiana Veterans by the numbers



FY2023

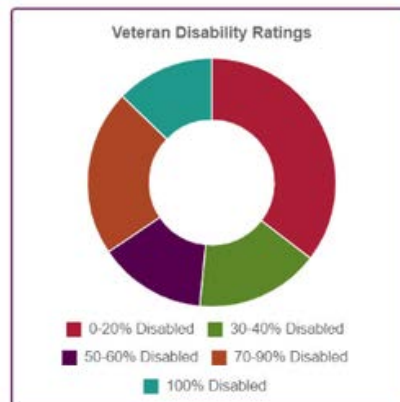
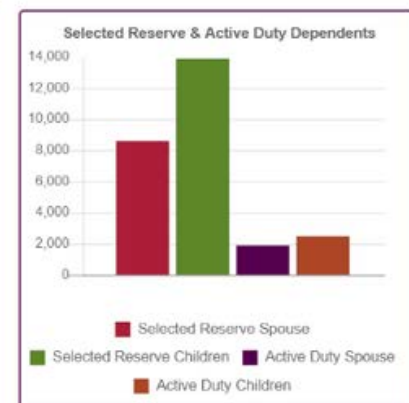
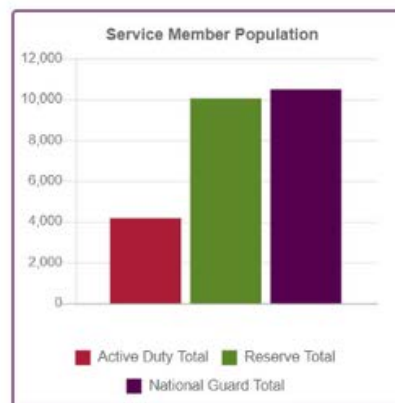
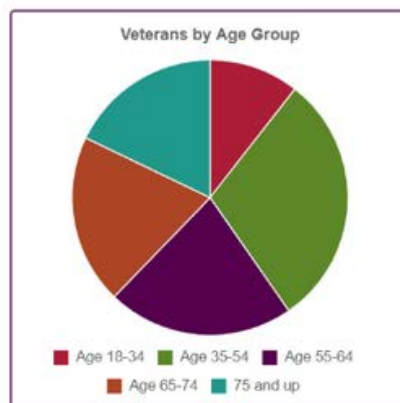
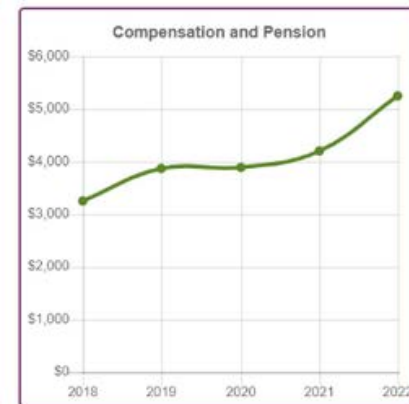
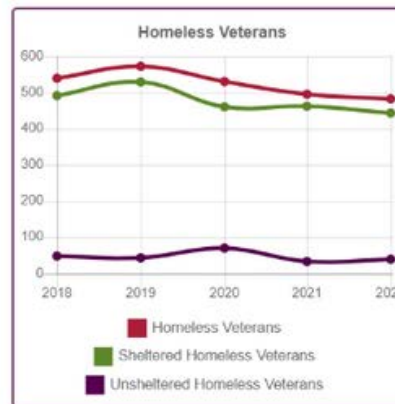
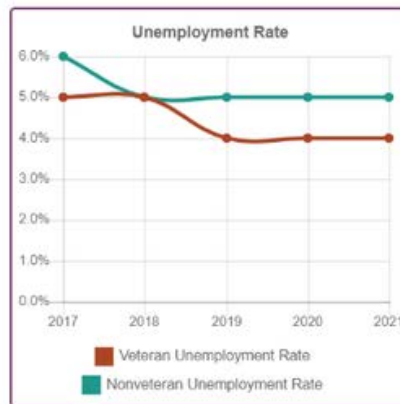
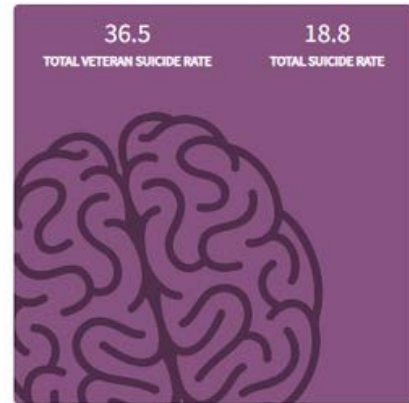
Veteran Population by % Male and Female



Number of Veteran Treatment Courts



Suicide Rates (per 100,000 population)



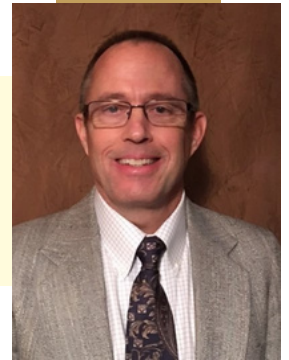


Dennis A. Wimer, Director

Dennis is a well-rounded leader who has put his years of experience in business, non-profit, and education to work for the agency. His passion for helping people and serving the veteran community is what drives his commitment to supporting Indiana's veterans and their families.

Tim Winslow, Operations Director

Tim is the Assistant Adjutant General in the Indiana National Guard and oversees four divisions within IDVA. In his role, he collaborates with various organizations and State agencies to help veterans access their earned benefits.



Gabrielle Owens, General Counsel

As the General Counsel, Gabrielle brings over 25 years of legal experience to the team. She also provides leadership in policy, audit and legislative functions. Gabrielle's father is a retired Air Force colonel.



Amy Gibson, IVH Superintendent

Amy brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our community of veterans at the Home. With over 10 years of experience as a Nursing Home Administrator in various communities, she provides oversight and ensures quality care. Amy is a proud graduate of IUPUI and Indiana Wesleyan.



Joseph DeVito, Outreach Director

Joe, a Coast Guard veteran, Indiana University Southeast graduate, former County Veteran Service Officer and District Service Officer, brings experience in business, outreach, and volunteer work. He is passionate about reaching veterans and increasing the number of veterans served and benefits awarded across the state.





TRAINING & SERVICES



Timothy E. Dyke
Director
Training & Services



Philip A. Krumm
Director
Training Manager



Jeff Imhof
Northwest District
Service Officer



Cameron Lochner
Northeast District
Service Officer



Michael L. Hamm
State Veteran Service
Officer



Josh Tolen
Central-West District
Service Officer



Cambria Sparks
Central East
District
Service Officer



Kevin Hinton
Southwest District
Service Officer



Ronald Higgins
Southeast District
Service Officer

STATE APPROVING AGENCY



Amber R. Mertens
Director



Tim Wilson
Assistant Director



Jada Coleman
Program Coordinator



Kimberly Bloodgood
Program Director



Gary Rainey
Program Director



Sean Litchford
Program Director

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Kelly Cherry
IDVA
Office Manager



Shannon Nicoloff
IDVA
Customer Service
Representative



INDIANA VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERY



Alan J. Burnham
Superintendent



Charlie J. Burton
Asst. Superintendent



David McKay
Foreman



Albert S. Bennett
Foreman

OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS



Kirsten Clark
Communications
Manager



Laura McKee
Women Veterans
Coordinator



Salon N. Osborne
Digital Marketing
Manager



Bryan Schmidt
Health & Wellness
Coordinator

MILITARY FAMILY RELIEF FUND



Lynn Dickey
Director



Janie Gregory
Assistant Director

LEGAL & LEGISLATIVE



Anthony Weber
Deputy Director



Brookelynn Deaton
Grant & Compliance
Administrator

Support, Serve, and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community

The Indiana Veteran Community consists of veterans, family members, caregivers, friends, organizations, and providers that touch veteran lives in some way. Indiana owes a great debt to its veterans, past and present, for their personal sacrifices and dedicated service. IDVA is committed to providing quality services, benefits, and programming. We are devoted to enhancing and expanding Indiana's resources, and continuing our vision:

Indiana is the choice for veterans to Live, Work, and Thrive.

Improving the Lives of Indiana Veterans: The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA)

Since its establishment in 1945, the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) has been committed to enhancing the welfare of Indiana veterans. As benefits and veteran communities have evolved, IDVA has customized its communication to accommodate all veteran groups. Its staff members organize and participate in various events and activities across the state to reach out to veterans and their families throughout the year.

IDVA's partnerships with other state agencies and public and private organizations continue to expand. The Indiana Veterans Center houses numerous veteran agencies, including federal, state, city, and nonprofit organizations. This combination is unparalleled to any other facility in the country.



The organization is growing rapidly, and IDVA has been expanding its operations and staff to meet its goal of Supporting, Serving, and Advocating for Indiana's entire veteran community. Under the guidance of Director Wimer, the executive team focuses on transparency, implementing effective policies, empowering staff, and striving for positive change.

The entire IDVA, including the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery and the Indiana Veterans Home, is dedicated to achieving its vision that Indiana is the ideal place for veterans to live, work, and thrive.

Training & Services

Overview of IDVA Training and Services Division Staff and Mobile Team

The IDVA Training and Services Division is composed of several key members, including the Director of Veterans Services, the Training Manager, and the State Veteran Service Officer. In addition, the mobile team consists of six District Service Officers (DSOs).

The director of veterans services and the training manager are responsible for managing daily state benefit applications and online applications for Tuition and Fee Exemption. The State Service Officers specifically focus on assisting veterans who are applying for federal benefits, VA pension benefits, and VA health care enrollment.

The District Service Officers are situated throughout the state and provide guidance and training for newly appointed County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) and their staff. They also assist with CVSO outreach and conduct quarterly district CVSO training and information meetings.



Veteran License Plates

853

APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

- Disabled Veteran
- Purple Heart
- POW/MIA



Disabled Property Tax Deductions

688

APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

Reduced Fee Hunting & Fishing License

601

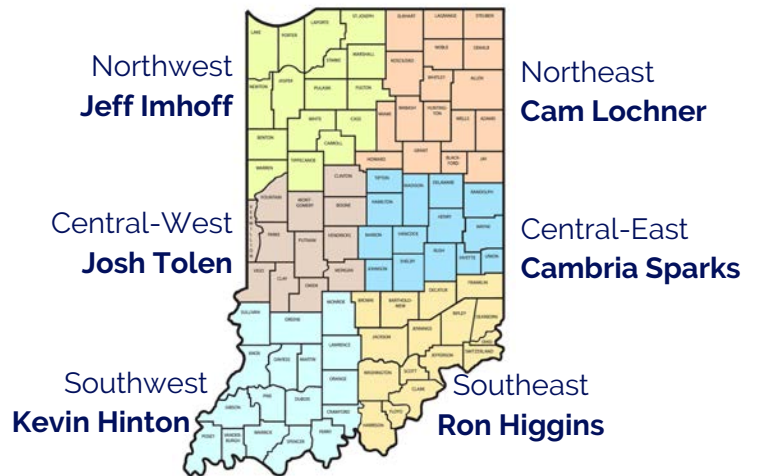
APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

Tuition & Fee Exemption Applications:

2020-2021 Academic Year: 1,809

**1,647 Awarded
69 Denied 75 On Hold**

Tuition & Fee Exemption Applications are 100% filed online using Scholar Track application system



District Service Officers (DSO)

The six (6) DSOs each cover 13-15 CVSO offices. They provide on-site training and special projects assistance to the county offices to bring training and services to the CVSO office.



Military Family Relief Fund

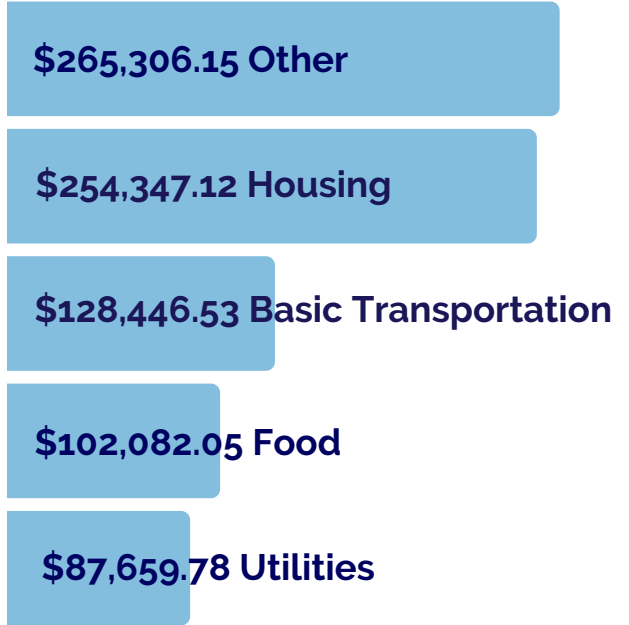
Assisting Veterans and Dependents through the Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF)

The Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) is dedicated to supporting veterans and their dependents who are faced with financial hardships. The fund provides assistance for essential household expenses that have become difficult to afford. In fiscal year 2023, the MFRF continued to offer its regular program, as well as two specialty programs: Operation Holiday Program and Operation Back to School.

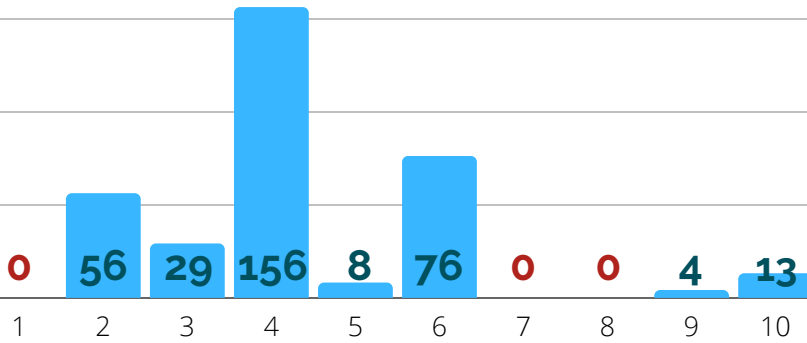
To streamline the application process, the MFRF has created an online portal on its website for submitting applications. Additionally, a new digital case management system is in place to ensure more efficient and accurate processing of applications.

The MFRF has established a robust network of partners to support veterans in various areas of need, including job searches, financial counseling, federal and health benefits, and legal counsel.

Expenditures by Need



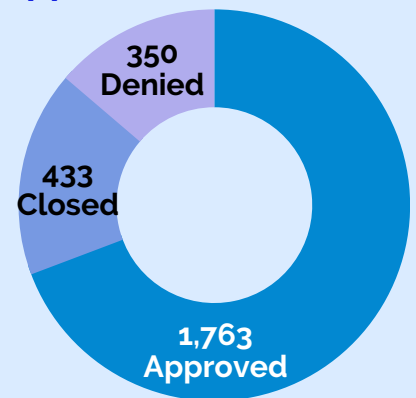
MFRF Denial Reason



- ~~1 - Hardship was not caused by military service.~~
- 2 - Applicant is over the poverty limit.
- 3 - Applicant had other assets available.
- 4 - There was no general hardship.
- 5 - Applicant had already exhausted MFRF funds.
- 6 - Applicant's reported expenditures were inappropriate.
- ~~7 - Applicant had less than 12 mo. active duty time.~~
- ~~8 - Applicant did not serve during a wartime period.~~
- 9 - Applicant's discharge was not accepted.
- 10 - Applicant was not IN resident/not a dependant.

----- **No longer a barrier to eligibility**

2,546 MFRF Applications Processed



Handling Incomplete Applications at MFRF

At MFRF, we make every effort to contact applicants and obtain any necessary information when an incomplete application is received. If we're unable to reach them after 30 days, the application is closed without any impact on the applicant's ability to reapply.

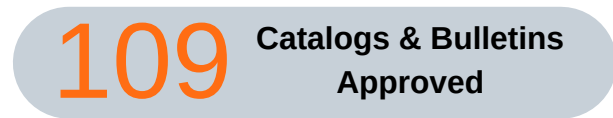
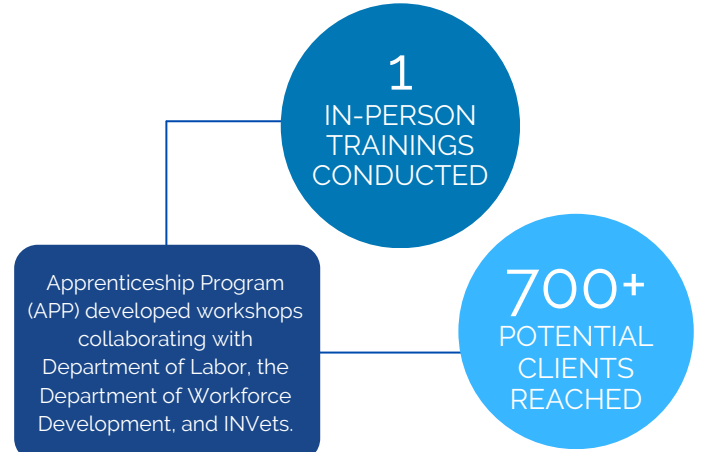
State Approving Agency



The Role of the State Approving Agency (SAA) in Approving Educational Programs for Veterans

The State Approving Agency (SAA) is responsible for approving a variety of educational programs, including college and non-college degree programs, vocational flight training, apprenticeships, and other on-the-job training programs. These approvals enable veterans and other eligible individuals to receive federal educational assistance benefits through programs managed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Working in conjunction with the VA, the SAA is responsible for approving and maintaining the approval of educational and training facilities. In FY23, the SAA welcomed two new Program Directors and an Outreach Coordinator. The agency successfully fulfilled all requirements of the fiscal year 2022 cooperative agreement and received a satisfactory rating - the highest possible.

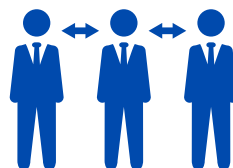


Compliance Surveys are assigned by the VA to avoid/detect institutional waste, fraud and abuse.



Without these APP programs, many federal GIBILL® benefits would remain unused!

Apprenticeship Program (APP)



APP attracts veterans and their families from across the nation to live, work & thrive in Indiana



Legal & Legislative

LEGAL & LEGISLATIVE

Grants For Veterans Services (GVS)

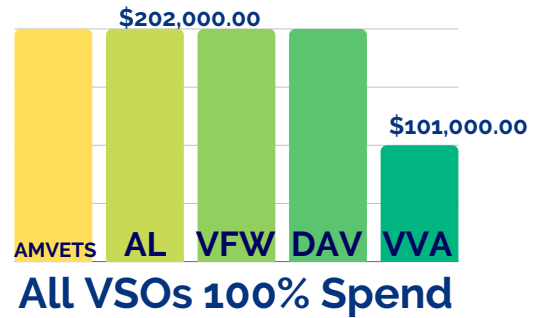
FY 2023 Grantees

- Indiana Legal Services**
Awarded: \$70,177 Spent 100%
- Veterans Life Changing Services**
Awarded: \$76,178 Spent 100%
- Operation Combat Bikesaver**
Awarded: \$86,737 Spent 100%
- Lafayette Transitional Housing Center**
Awarded: \$43,200 Spent 100%
- Hope Southern Indiana**
Awarded: \$31,172 Spent 100%
- Turnstone Center for Children & Adults w/Disabilities**
Awarded: \$16,832 Spent 100%
- Reach Services**
Awarded: \$77,072 Spent 100%
- Family Service Association of Howard County**
Awarded: \$50,000 Spent 100%
- InteCare**
Awarded: \$49,172 Spent 100%
- NeighborLink Fort Wayne**
Awarded: \$19,172 Spent 100%
- YMCA**
Awarded: \$21,651 Spent 100%
- HVAF**
Awarded: \$43,172 Spent 100%
- Randolph County Veteran Shelter The Journey Home**
Awarded: \$25,172 Spent 55% (extension granted)
- Southern IN Veterans Living & Rehab Facility**
Awarded: \$15,572 Spent 81% (extension granted)

The Role of the IDVA Legal & Legislative Division (ILL)

The IDVA Legal & Legislative Division (ILL) serves as a trusted advisor to the IDVA Executive Team and all other divisions of IDVA. ILL is responsible for representing IDVA in appeals, coordinating all IDVA legislative functions, administering grants to nonprofit organizations that assist veterans and nationally chartered veteran service organizations, conducting compliance monitoring of state grant funds, executing contracts and other legal memoranda, and overseeing administrative activities for the Indiana Veterans Affairs Commission.

Veteran Service Organization GRANTS



37 OVER \$2500 REQUESTS

37 APPROVED

**Total Awarded
\$86,159.79**

Tuition & Fee Exemption Appeals

6 TOTAL APPEALS

- 4 Adoption
- 2 Residency
- 0 Over 32 years of age
- 0 Period of War/Hazardous Duty

Overturned

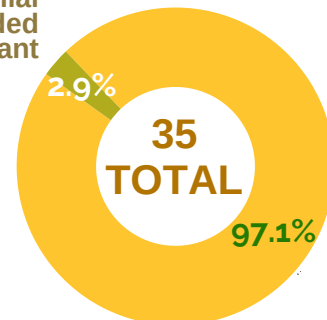
5

1

Upheld

MFRF Appeals

1 Denial
Awarded
to Applicant



**34 Denials
Affirmed**

Outreach & Communications

Expanding IDVA's Reach Statewide Through Outreach Division

IDVA's outreach division has been successful in expanding its reach statewide. One such example is the "The Hoosier Veteran" newsletter. With a new layout and design, this publication has garnered increased interest, readership, and subscriptions. Through the featured articles, the newsletter has developed a following of veterans who enjoy learning about other fascinating Hoosier veterans, events, and topics. Additionally, other media outlets have distributed Hoosier Veteran features statewide. We are excited to share more inspiring tales of veterans this next fiscal year!

FY 2023 Subscriber Profiles

Direct
Subscriptions
186

IDVA site
pop-up
1,267

Network
Subscriptions
2,583

Total
Newsletter
Subscribers
34,002

Subscription
+2,427

+7.7%
Growth

Unique emails
opens
295,566

Remembering a Hero: Robert Oliver, Jr.

Story & Photos by Kirsten Clark

Madison, Ind. -- Loving, knowledgeable, steadfast, humble. While these words are just a few of the many adjectives fellow police officers and friends used to describe Robert Oliver, Jr., he was a man who left an indelible legacy of kindness and quiet strength on the Louisville Metro Police Department and all who knew him.

Evansville Wartime Museum

Promoting awareness of the Evansville region's wartime contributions and home front legacy.

The Army-Navy "E" flag was awarded to companies who met and exceeded production schedules. Many companies in Evansville received several E awards during the war years.

A radio from the period sits atop a cabinet displaying rationing books and other high-demand items. Hoarding of consumer goods contributed greatly to conserving essential supplies for the war effort.

Barbara Ericson was a Women Air Force Service Pilot (WAFSP) and a member of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS). She picked up and delivered various military aircraft to and from factories and air bases in the U.S. She is the only woman awarded the Air Medal during WW II.



Celebrating 16 years of restored Huey history

by Kirsten Clark

The Army UH-1H #65-08803 flies again. (Americanhuey369.com)

Impressions
506K

Open Rate
32.6%

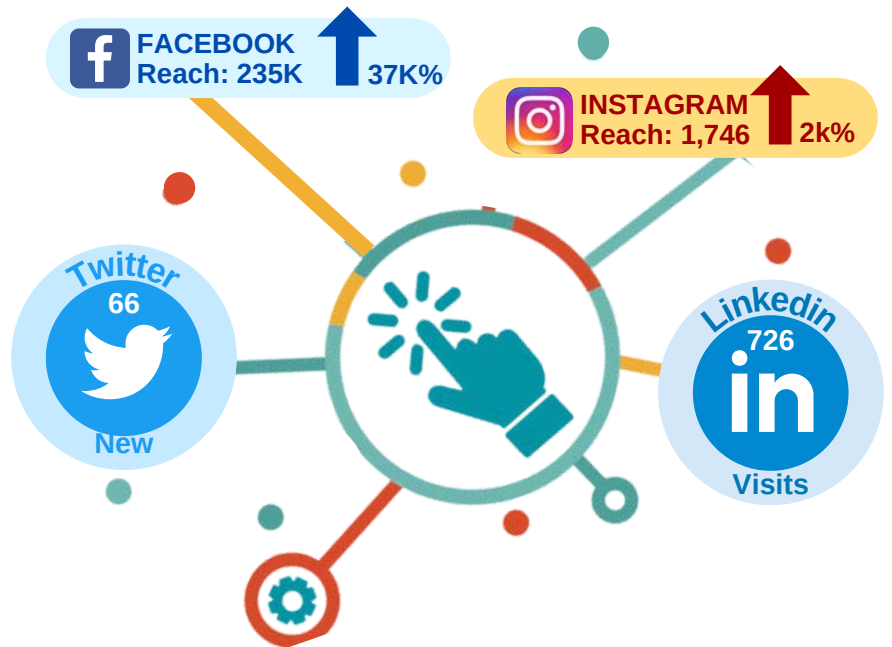
Click Rate
2.1%

Engagement
Rate 62%

Outreach & Communications

Expanding Our Digital Footprint at IDVA

With our social media channels, web presence, and digital marketing campaigns, the IDVA has established itself as a prominent figure in event promotion and information dissemination throughout the state. Our digital footprint continues to grow with each passing day.



IN.GOV/DVA

Website Activity

- **Users: 200K**
- **Sessions: 414K**
- **Total Page Visits: 125K**
- **Top device-mobile: 61.5%**
- **Total page views: 495K**
- **Top pages:**
 - **Locate your CVSO 27,792**
 - **MFRF 21,930**
- **10K users w/ 9+ visits**
 - **67% were new users**
- **Highest day 01/12/22 - 1,014 users**
- **Avg. time on page per visit: 2m 27s**



Empowering Women Veterans Through WINVet Program

The WINVet program is committed to helping women veterans achieve an outstanding quality of life by providing them with reliable resources, high-quality community outreach, and fostering extensive networking opportunities. The women's program also coordinates and participates in statewide outreach events, collaborates with service organizations, and partners with the VA to provide education and enrichment to women veterans.

As a former president and current member of the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators, the IDVA women veteran coordinator collaborates with federal and state agencies to foster relationships that benefit women veterans in Indiana. The IDVA Women Veteran Wellness retreats, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, promote mental, physical, and emotional health in a conducive environment. The participation rate for these retreats has risen by 26% since its inception, leading to the decision to hold two retreats annually starting in 2024.

The Women Veteran Registry process was revamped to streamline the application process, resulting in over 115 new women veteran applicants. This more efficient system provides vital information to offer dedicated support throughout the state of Indiana.



Creating healthy opportunities for the Indiana Veteran Community to Live, Work & Thrive.

Promoting Health and Wellness for Indiana Veterans with IDVA

IDVA Health & Wellness collaborates with community partners to prioritize physical and mental health. Our mission is to improve the overall health of Indiana's veteran community by targeting key factors that promote long-term well-being.

The Indiana Governor's Challenge, which aims to prevent suicide among service members, veterans, and their families, is being spearheaded by IDVA Health & Wellness, in collaboration with key state agency partners.

By working together, we can make significant improvements in policy, practice, and implementation across the state. Join us in our mission to make a difference and **Join IN.**



Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery



FY2023

Honoring Veterans and Their Families at the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery

The Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery serves as both a final resting place and a lasting tribute to veterans and their families. It stands as a symbol of appreciation and gratitude for the sacrifices made in service to our country.



VETERANS DAY 2022

Honoring Veterans in Indiana: A Recap of the 2022 Veterans Day Celebrations

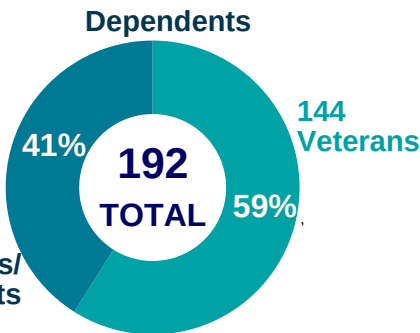
- On November 10, 2022, the Indiana Veterans Memorial Cemetery staff placed American flags on all gravesites, and the public was invited to visit the cemetery grounds.
- The following day, November 11, 2022, the Jefferson County Veterans Council hosted a Veterans Day service in Downtown Madison. The IVMC staff attended the program and the dinner which followed. Veterans and their families were also provided with a delicious meal.

PRE-NEED
BURIAL
APPLICATION

91 Submitted
90 Approved



On May 30, 2023, IVMC hosted a Memorial Day service that garnered a large turnout. The event featured poignant speeches from State Rep. Randy Frye, IDVA Director Dennis Wimer, and Madison Mayor Bob Courtney.



IVMC INTERMENTS



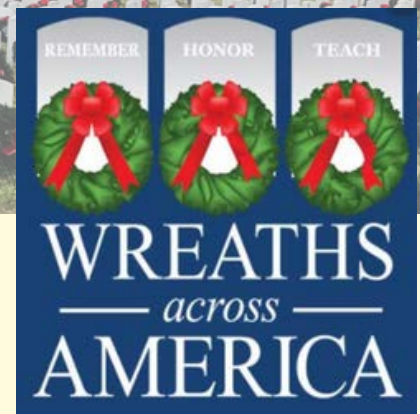
2,455

Governor's
Memorial
Certificates
Issued



Honoring Our Fallen Heroes: Wreaths Across America at IVMC

On December 18, 2022, IVMC hosted Wreaths Across America, an event that saw a remarkable turnout from the community with around 350 attendees. Together, we laid wreaths on every gravesite to honor those who sacrificed everything for our country. A total of 1,650 wreaths were placed, each one a symbol of gratitude for our fallen heroes.



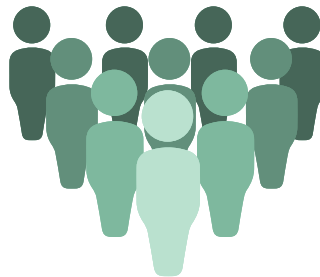
Our Mission

To meet the unique needs of Indiana's veterans, spouses and families. Deliver high level care in a therapeutic home-like environment with compassion and comprehensive skilled care while integrating arts and cultural programming.

Our Vision

Honor Indiana's veteran community through high level care, enhancing health and yielding optimal quality of life while preserving the rich history of the home.

Residents: 124



06/30/2023



75

New Residents



Highlights from the Elkhart Vette Show in September 2022

The Elkhart Vette Set attended the Elkhart Vette Show and made quite an impact. In addition to donating money, they also contributed nine large totes filled with donations.



Saluting Branches Day of Service - September 2022

Arborists United Veteran Remembrance, a non-profit organization, hosts the Saluting Branches Day of Service every year. This event, which is the largest volunteer event in the tree care industry, brings together arborists who donate a full day of their time to pay tribute to America's military service men and women. The IVH site boasts the highest volunteer turnout compared to other locations.





Indiana Veterans Center

777 NORTH MERIDIAN STREET-INDIANAPOLIS, IN 26204

FIRST FLOOR

Veterans Administration

- Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) (800) 827-1000
- Veterans Readiness & Employment (VBA) (800) 827-1000
- VA HUD-VASH Vocational Rehabilitation (317) 464-1400

Service Organizations

- Volunteers of America (463) 202-5864
- Disabled American Veterans (317) 319-3844
- INvets (317) 353-3674
- American Legion (317) 916-3605

SECOND FLOOR

- VA HUD-VASH Veteran Health Initiative Clinic (317) 778-0217

THIRD FLOOR

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (317) 232-3910

- State Approving Agency (SAA) (317) 234-6062
- Training & Services (317) 234-8628
- Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) (317) 232-3914
- Outreach & Communication (317) 234-9769
- Women Veterans Coordinator (317) 232-3919
- Legislative & Legal (317) 232-3165
- State Veteran Service Officer (317) 232-3910
- Indiana Department of Workforce Development (317) 234-8661
 - Local Veterans Employment Specialist (LVER)
 - Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP)

FOURTH FLOOR

- Operation: Job Ready Veterans (317) 982-7781
- Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans (317) 549-5900
- Historic Auditorium - Conference/Meeting Space (317) 921-5563
- The Indy Vet House, Inc. (317) 988-1200
- Veterans Housing Veterans (BRS Reality Group) (317) 344-9767

Mission

The mission of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is to Support, Serve and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community.



Vision

Indiana is the choice for Veterans to Live, Work and Thrive.