

**ANALYSIS OF THE NEW JERSEY BUDGET**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
MILITARY AND  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

**FISCAL YEAR**

**2015 - 2016**

# NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE

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This report was prepared by the State Government Section of the Office of Legislative Services under the direction of the Legislative Budget and Finance Officer. The primary author was Kimberly McCord Clemmensen. The background paper entitled "New Jersey Veterans Service Officers" was authored by Tracey Pino Murphy, Raysa Martinez Kruger, and Kimberly McCord Clemmensen.

Questions or comments may be directed to the OLS State Government Section (609-292-9106) or the Legislative Budget and Finance Office (609-847-3105).

# DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Budget Pages..... C-6, C-14, C-21 to C-22, C-25, C-26,  
D-273 to D-285

## **Fiscal Summary (\$000)**

	Expended FY 2014	Adjusted Appropriation FY 2015	Recommended FY 2016	Percent Change 2015-16
State Budgeted	\$99,592	\$97,515	\$96,454	( 1.1%)
Federal Funds	\$82,289	\$95,371	\$100,621	5.5%
<u>Other</u>	<u>\$2,767</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>	<u>\$4,755</u>	<u>( 4.9%)</u>
Grand Total	\$184,648	\$197,886	\$201,830	2.0%

## **Personnel Summary - Positions By Funding Source**

	Actual FY 2014	Revised FY 2015	Funded FY 2016	Percent Change 2015-16
State	1,315	1,294	1,311	1.3%
Federal	158	155	167	7.7%
<u>Other</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	=
Total Positions	1,473	1,449	1,478	2.0%

FY 2014 (as of December) and revised FY 2015 (as of January) personnel data reflect actual payroll counts. FY 2016 data reflect the number of positions funded.

Link to Website: <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislativepub/finance.asp>

## Highlights

### Overview

The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, under the direction of the Adjutant General of New Jersey, is responsible for supporting the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard, administering veterans' programs and services for the 441,820<sup>1</sup> veterans living in New Jersey, and managing and operating three veterans' memorial homes: Menlo Park Veterans' Memorial Home, Paramus Veterans' Memorial Home, and Vineland Veterans' Memorial Home. The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends \$201.8 million in total funding for the operation and support of the department: \$96.5 million in State funds, \$100.6 million in federal funds, and \$4.8 million in other funds. This represents a reduction of \$1.061 million in State funds; an increase of \$5.3 million in federal funds; and a reduction of \$245,000 in other funds, as compared to the current year.

### Military Services

The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, Military Services, is responsible for the support and coordination of Army and Air National Guard activities in New Jersey. The National Guard responds to emergencies within the State upon the declaration of a State emergency by the Governor. The department's federal military responsibility is to provide trained and qualified individuals and troop units in the support of the Army and Air Force of the United States. The department estimates that as of June 30, 2015 the Army and Air National Guard will be at 100 percent of their authorized strength and projects that it will remain at that level in FY 2016.

- The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends federal funding of \$34 million for the design and construction of a regional training facility at Sea Girt. The regional training center for the Army National Guard is approximately 25 percent complete.
- The department has constructed solar renewable energy systems in Sea Girt, Fort Dix/Lakehurst, and Lawrenceville. The department estimates receipts of \$4 million in Military Construction (MILCON) and Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (SRM) funding for the continuation of the construction of additional solar photovoltaic alternative energy projects in Sea Girt (\$1 million) and at its headquarters in Lawrenceville (\$4 million) in FY 2016.
- Federal funding for the New National Guard Support Services is proposed to increase in FY 2016 by \$5.127 million primarily increasing support for Army National Guard support contracts (\$3.6 million) and for the Hazardous Material Program (\$1.4 million).
- The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends an increase of 23.1 percent, or \$216,000, for Administration and Support Services to fund the purchase of licensing and maintenance agreements for new computer software to replace existing software that has reached its end-of-service life. In order to accomplish this, the department reduced other appropriations as follows: \$56,000 in salaries and wages for one position in New Jersey National Guard Support Services performing Homeland Security

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is based on the most recent federal Census Bureau data.

## Highlights (Cont'd)

functions; \$50,000 in Honor Guard Support Services, \$100,000 in Services to Returning Veterans; and \$10,000 in various grants-in-aid accounts for veterans' tuition assistance.

### Services to Veterans

- The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs is responsible for the support and coordination of various services to military veterans in New Jersey including Outreach and Assistance, Veterans Haven, and Burial Services. The department operates over 16 veteran affairs outreach and assistance services offices throughout the State. These offices assist veterans and their dependents in securing State and federal entitlements.
- The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of \$1.061 million for the three veteran's memorial homes. This total reduction represents a recurring supplemental appropriation from prior year revenues from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs per diems, member maintenance contributions, and Medicare Part A receipts accounted for in Schedule I under "Soldiers' Homes." Budget language provides that the department may receive forty percent of the receipts from these sources that are in excess of the amount anticipated in the preceding fiscal year. The remaining 60 percent is deposited into the General Fund. The department uses the supplemental appropriation for veterans' program needs, mostly medical supplies and equipment, at the three veterans' homes.

Background Paper

**New Jersey Veterans Service Officers**

**p.12**

**Fiscal and Personnel Summary**

**AGENCY FUNDING BY SOURCE OF FUNDS (\$000)**

	Expended FY 2014	Adj. Approp. FY 2015	Recom. FY 2016	Percent Change	
				2014-16	2015-16
<b>General Fund</b>					
Direct State Services	\$97,246	\$94,891	\$93,940	( 3.4%)	( 1.0%)
Grants-In-Aid	2,346	2,624	2,514	7.2%	( 4.2%)
State Aid	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Capital Construction	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Debt Service	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$99,592</b>	<b>\$97,515</b>	<b>\$96,454</b>	<b>( 3.2%)</b>	<b>( 1.1%)</b>
<b>Property Tax Relief Fund</b>					
Direct State Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Grants-In-Aid	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
State Aid	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Casino Revenue Fund</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Casino Control Fund</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>State Total</b>	<b>\$99,592</b>	<b>\$97,515</b>	<b>\$96,454</b>	<b>( 3.2%)</b>	<b>( 1.1%)</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>	\$82,289	\$95,371	\$100,621	22.3%	5.5%
<b>Other Funds</b>	\$2,767	\$5,000	\$4,755	71.8%	( 4.9%)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$184,648</b>	<b>\$197,886</b>	<b>\$201,830</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

**PERSONNEL SUMMARY - POSITIONS BY FUNDING SOURCE**

	Actual FY 2014	Revised FY 2015	Funded FY 2016	Percent Change	
				2014-16	2015-16
State	1,315	1,294	1,311	( 0.3%)	1.3%
Federal	158	155	167	5.7%	7.7%
All Other	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>1,478</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

FY 2014 (as of December) and revised FY 2015 (as of January) personnel data reflect actual payroll counts. FY 2016 data reflect the number of positions funded.

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DATA**

Total Minority Percent	67.2%	79.6%	---	---	---
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**Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000)**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp.</u> <u>FY 2015</u>	<u>Recomm.</u> <u>FY 2016</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>Page</u>
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**MILITARY SERVICES**

The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, Military Services, is responsible for the support and coordination of Army and Air National Guard activities in New Jersey. The National Guard responds to emergencies within the State upon the declaration of a State emergency by the Governor. The department's federal military responsibility is to provide trained and qualified individuals and troop units in the support of the Army and Air Force of the United States.

**Direct State Services**

<b>Salaries and Wages</b>	<b>\$3,701</b>	<b>\$3,645</b>	<b>(\$ 56)</b>	<b>( 1.5%)</b>	<b>D-277</b>
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This budget items funds salaries and wages for the Joint Training Center for Management and Operations at Sea Girt, and Administration and Support Services at both the headquarters in Lawrenceville and the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 1.5 percent, or \$56,000 representing a reduction of one vacant position assigned homeland security functions.

**Services Other Than  
Personal**

	<b>\$935</b>	<b>\$1,151</b>	<b>\$ 216</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>D-277</b>
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This budget item funds general operating expenses for Administration and Support Services (Central Operations) and other service costs for office equipment including, but not limited to printers, faxes, telephones, and computer hardware and software maintenance and licensing agreements. In addition, this appropriation funds professional services from consultants, licensed technical professionals such as engineers, and legal services.

The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends an increase of 23.1 percent, or \$216,000, to fund the purchase of licensing and maintenance agreements for new computer software to replace existing software that has reached its end-of-service life. In order to accomplish this, the department offset the \$216,000 proposed augmentation in this appropriation with reductions in other appropriations.

The Office of Legislative Services notes that the FY 2015 Appropriations Act increased this appropriation by \$200,000 to provide funding for Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) purposes. The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends continuing this component of funding.

**Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000) (Cont'd)**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp. FY 2015</u>	<u>Recomm. FY 2016</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Budget Page</u>
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**Federal Funds**

**New Jersey National  
Guard Support  
Services**

<b>\$35,722</b>	<b>\$40,849</b>	<b>\$ 5,127</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>D-277</b>
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This budget line item aggregates multiple federal grants that meet capital and operating needs of the New Jersey National Guard (NJNG). Proposed FY 2016 changes within this item include increases totaling \$5.4 million predominantly for federal National Guard and Army facilities support contracts (\$3.6 million), the Hazardous Materials Program under the Environmental Protection Agency (\$1.4 million), and armory and training site funding (\$353,000). These increases are offset by reductions of \$200,000 in National Guard Communications funding, \$26,000 in McGuire operations and maintenance, and \$10,000 in the Army National Guard Security Program.

**All Other Funds**

**Administration and  
Support Services**

<b>\$330</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>(\$ 130)</b>	<b>( 39.4%)</b>	<b>D-277</b>
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This appropriation represents anticipated revenue from energy receipts, i.e., solar renewable energy credits (SRECs). The SREC results from a Board of Public Utilities (BPU) program that requires utility companies to achieve renewable energy production goals. The value of the SREC is market driven and is periodically auctioned at the BPU website after the generation of renewable energy. One SREC is equivalent to the production of 1,000 KWh of electricity using solar energy. The SREC receipts are in addition to cost avoidance savings.

The FY 2016 Governor's Budget estimates a reduction in energy receipts of 39.4 percent, or \$130,000. According to the Department, the reduction in energy receipts is due to mainly to lower generation capacity in FY 2015 than what was originally expected. First, the Sea Girt photovoltaic solar electric power system that was anticipated to be completed in FY 2015 was delayed. Second, the photovoltaic solar electric power system in Lakehurst experienced maintenance problems. Hence, neither system was able to generate any solar power in FY 2015. Finally, and to a lesser extent, SREC prices on the market have fallen somewhat in response to competition for alternative energy from natural gas suppliers.

**SERVICES TO VETERANS**

The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs is responsible for the support and coordination of various services to military veterans in New Jersey including Outreach and Assistance, Veterans Haven, Burial Services and the three Veterans' Memorial Homes. The department operates over 16 veteran affairs outreach and assistance services offices throughout the State.



**Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000) (Cont'd)**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp.</u> <u>FY 2015</u>	<u>Recomm.</u> <u>FY 2016</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>Page</u>
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**Direct State Services****Honor Guard Support Services**

	<b>\$423</b>	<b>\$373</b>	<b>(\$ 50)</b>	<b>( 11.8%)</b>	<b>D-279</b>
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The New Jersey National Guard Honor Guard provides Military Funeral Honors to fallen veterans, retirees, and current Soldiers. In order to complete this mission, the Honor Guard trains for, rehearses, and executes funeral details in accordance with applicable law and regulation. The Honor Guard soldiers and airmen strive to exceed standards set forth by these regulations and provide the best possible service to honor the deceased, and provide a lasting experience for the family in their time of grief.

The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 11.8 percent, or \$50,000, representing a reduction of one vacant position in Honor Guard support services.

**Grants-in-Aid****Support Services for Returning Veterans**

	<b>\$550</b>	<b>\$450</b>	<b>(\$ 100)</b>	<b>( 18.2%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
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The appropriation for Support Services for Returning Veterans has traditionally funded healthcare, outreach, and veterans' family support services to returning veterans and their families. During times of large deployments, as in 2008-2009, when the New Jersey National Guard deployed over 3,800 soldiers to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the appropriation for Support Services to Returning Veterans also funded the Yellow Ribbon Commission Grant Program that provided subsistence grants and business "Re-Start" grants in addition to health care and outreach services.

Currently, the Support Services for Returning Veterans appropriation primarily funds the Vet-to-Vet Hotline through a contract with Rutgers. It also provides grant funding to counties for veteran transportation, supplementing the Veterans' Transportation grant-in-aid appropriation. Advertising for outreach purposes is also paid out of this account.

The FY 2016 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 18.2 percent, or \$100,000, representing a reduction in the supplemental transportation funding that the department provides to the counties for veterans' transportation services. The department retains \$335,000 in grant funding for Veterans' Transportation, also provided to counties for veterans' transportation services. This reduction will require counties to consider whether to substitute own-source funding to offset reduced state funding, or to adjust service levels.

**Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000) (Cont'd)**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp.</u> <u>FY 2015</u>	<u>Recomm.</u> <u>FY 2016</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>Page</u>
<b><u>Veterans' Tuition Grants</u></b>					
<b>Veterans' Tuition Credit Program</b>	<b>\$8</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$ 8)</b>	<b>( 100.0%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
<b>POW/MIA Tuition Assistance</b>	<b>\$1</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$ 1)</b>	<b>( 100.0%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
<b>Veterans' Tuition Grants</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$4</b>	<b>\$ 4</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>D-280</b>
<b>Vietnam Veterans' Tuition Aid</b>	<b>\$2</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$ 2)</b>	<b>( 100.0%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
<b>Veterans' Orphan Fund-Education Grants</b>	<b>\$3</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$ 3)</b>	<b>( 100.0%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14</b>	<b>\$4</b>	<b>(\$ 10)</b>	<b>( 71.4%)</b>	<b>—</b>

The FY 2016 Governor's budget recommends a net reduction of \$10,000 to the tuition related Grants-In-Aid (GIA) portion of the Veterans' Outreach and Assistance budget. This proposed reduction consolidates \$4,000 of veterans' tuition grants for education into a newly created general appropriation entitled Veterans' Tuition Grants and eliminates \$10,000 in funding for four former specialized veterans' tuition aid grants, credits, and assistance appropriations. This reduced level of funding for tuition grants is higher than the amount expended on such grants in the last completed fiscal year. Evaluation date indicate that there are seven participants in tuition assistance programs.

**Federal Funds**

<b>Veterans' Outreach and Assistance</b>	<b>\$600</b>	<b>\$552</b>	<b>(\$ 48)</b>	<b>( 8.0%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
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The FY 2016 Governor's Budget proposes a reduction of 8 percent, or \$48,000, in this account reflecting a reduction in federal funding for federal Veterans' Education Monitoring. Institutions of higher education in the United States must be approved by a qualified agency under Title 38 of the United States Code (Veterans Benefits) and under contract with the VA in order to be able to certify educational benefits for veterans and their dependents at their institutions. Programs eligible for approval include undergraduate, graduate degree, and teacher certification programs. Courses that are not part of an approved curriculum are not eligible for benefits. As part of their mission, the agencies inspect, review and monitor the programs to prevent abuse and evaluate the programs to promote quality.

**Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000) (Cont'd)**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp. FY 2015</u>	<u>Recomm. FY 2016</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Budget Page</u>
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**All Other Funds**

**Veterans' Outreach  
and Assistance**

<b>\$98</b>	<b>\$108</b>	<b>\$ 10</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>D-280</b>
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This account aggregates various revenue generating accounts including POW/MIA medal donations, World War II Memorial donations (P.L.2005, c.59), and taxpayer contributions to the New Jersey Veterans' Haven Support Fund through a gross income tax check-off (P.L.2007, c.233).

The FY 2016 Governor's Budget projects an increase of 14.3 percent, or \$10,000, resulting from the collection of previously promised, but not received pledges to the World War II Memorial Fund from \$70,000 in FY 2015 to \$80,000 in FY 2016. Collections for the World War II Memorial Fund are dedicated to finishing the remaining elements of the memorial, specifically the two bronze bas sculptures reliefs behind the water wall. The total cost of the sculptures is approximately \$200,000. To date, the department has collected approximately 53 percent of the total cost to finish the bronze bas reliefs project.

P.L.2005, c.59 created a dedicated, non-lapsing fund as a memorial to World War II veterans. Money received by the World War II Memorial Commission through fund raising efforts, donations, and grants donated by the public or appropriated by law are deposited into the World War II Memorial Dedication Account. The money in the fund, including investment earnings is administered by the State Treasurer and held in the fund until appropriated by law.

**Veterans' Haven**

<b>\$2,170</b>	<b>\$2,045</b>	<b>(\$ 125)</b>	<b>( 5.8%)</b>	<b>D-280</b>
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This account appropriates federal per diem revenues for Veterans' Transitional Housing. This proposed reduction represents anticipated U.S. Veterans Affairs (VA) per diem revenues for Veterans' Haven South and Veterans' Haven North. Based on federal guidelines and application rules for the receipt of transitional housing funds, The FY 2016 Governor's Budget anticipates a net reduction of 5.8 percent, or \$125,000, which is the result of a reduction in VA funding for transitional housing.

**Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000) (Cont'd)**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp.</u> <u>FY 2015</u>	<u>Recomm.</u> <u>FY 2016</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>Page</u>
<b>VETERANS' MEMORIAL HOMES</b>					
<b><u>Direct State Services</u></b>					
<b>Services Other Than Personal</b>					
<b>Menlo Park Veterans' Memorial Home</b>	<b>\$1,536 (S)\$384</b>	<b>\$1,536</b>	<b>(\$ 384)</b>	<b>( 20.0%)</b>	<b>D-282</b>
<b>Paramus Veterans' Memorial Home</b>	<b>\$1,335 (S)192</b>	<b>\$1,335</b>	<b>(\$ 192)</b>	<b>( 12.6%)</b>	<b>D-283</b>
<b>Vineland Veterans' Memorial Home</b>	<b>\$124 (S)\$337</b>	<b>\$124</b>	<b>(\$ 337)</b>	<b>( 73.1%)</b>	<b>D-284</b>

This total reduction represents a recurring supplemental appropriation from prior year revenues from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs per diems, member maintenance contributions, and Medicare Part A receipts accounted for in Schedule I under "Soldiers' Homes." Budget language provides that the department may receive forty percent of the receipts from these sources that are in excess of the amount anticipated in the preceding fiscal year. The remaining 60 percent is deposited into the General Fund. The department uses the supplemental appropriation for veterans' program needs, mostly medical supplies and equipment, at the three veterans' homes.

## Significant Language Changes

Alternative Energy Credits and Rebates	
Revision	2015 Handbook: p. B-145 2016 Budget: p. D-278

Receipts from the sale of solar energy credits and the receipt of energy rebates and the unexpended balance at the end of the preceding fiscal year in the receipt account are appropriated for the operation and maintenance of other energy program projects.

### Explanation

The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs receives solar renewable energy credits and energy rebates from its investment in alternative energy projects and conservation programs. The department currently has six photovoltaic solar energy electric power systems in operation across the State. These systems generate solar power and in return, the department earns solar renewable credits (SRECs) from the Board of Public Utilities. One SREC is equivalent to the production of 1,000 KWh of electricity using solar energy. In addition to cost avoidance, the department receives revenue from the sale of the SRECs through auction. The FY 2016 Governor's Budget anticipates the receipt of \$200,000 in energy receipts in the budget year. In addition, to SRECs, the department participates in two energy rebate programs, the Smart Growth Initiative and the Energy Star programs. This language revision clarifies that not only the receipts and unexpended balances of energy credits, but also the receipts and unexpended balances of energy rebates are appropriated for the operation and maintenance of other energy program projects.

EXPLANATION: FY 2015 language not recommended for FY 2016 denoted by strikethrough.  
Recommended FY 2016 language that did not appear in FY 2015 denoted by underlining.

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers

### Introduction

The Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs (DMAVA), under the direction of the Adjutant General of New Jersey, is responsible for supporting the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard, managing and operating three veterans' memorial homes, and administering veterans' programs and services in New Jersey. Through its programs to provide services to veterans, the department supports, coordinates, and administers Outreach and Assistance programs, the Veterans Haven transitional housing program, and Burial Services. With regard to Outreach and Assistance programs, the department is recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a "veterans service organization" with accredited veterans service representatives who prepare, present, and prosecute claims for veterans seeking to receive their military benefits. Accordingly, DMAVA operates 14 veterans' service offices throughout the State and employs 16 Veterans Service Officers (VSOs). Because of the size of some of the service areas, some veterans' service offices have more than one VSO. The mission of the VSO is to ensure that military veterans receive the State and federal benefits to which they are entitled. The primary function of a VSO representing a veteran is to administer and manage claims through the State and federal benefits processes. The highest percentage of claims filed by VSOs on behalf of veterans represents the payment of claims for pensions and compensation.

### Authority for the Recognition of Veteran Service Organizations' Representation of Veterans Claiming Veterans' Benefits

The Office of the Secretary (Secretary) of the VA administers the federal laws and regulations<sup>2</sup> governing the representation of claimants for veterans' benefits. The purpose of the regulation of representatives, agents, attorneys and others who represent veterans is to ensure that veterans have responsible, qualified representation in the administration of their claims for their service benefits. Federal law requires organizations be recognized by the VA before they can represent a claimant for VA benefits. Recognition means certification by the VA of organizations to assist claimants in the "preparation, presentation, and prosecution" of claims<sup>3</sup> for benefits<sup>4</sup>.

Under federal law, only the Secretary of the VA is authorized to recognize organizations who wish to represent veterans in the administration of their claims. These organizations are known as "veteran service organizations." Organizations eligible for recognition by the Secretary for the purposes of representation include certain national organizations or those that are congressionally chartered such as the American Red Cross and the American Legion; State organizations such as DMAVA; and certain regional or local organizations meeting specific requirements for recognition, such as county veterans service offices.

Representation means the acts associated with representing a claimant in a proceeding before the VA pursuant to properly executed and filed claims forms. Organizations, like

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<sup>2</sup> Section 5902, formerly Section 3402 of Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) and Sub Section 14.627 to Sub Section 14.633 of 38 C.F.R.

<sup>3</sup> Claim means application made under Title 38 U.S.C., and implementing directives, for entitlement to VA benefits, reinstatement, continuation, or increase of benefits, or the defense of a proposed agency adverse action concerning benefits.

<sup>4</sup> Benefit means any payment, service, commodity, function, status, entitlement to which is determined under laws administered by the VA pertaining to veterans, dependents, and survivors.

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

DMAVA, applying to the VA to represent veterans file for the designation for the "Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative." Individuals applying to the VA to represent veterans file for the designation for the "Appointment of Individual as Claimant's Representative. There is a distinction between the appointment of a veterans' service organization as a claimant's representative and the appointment of an individual as a claimant's representative. The appointment of a representative of a veteran service organization means "service organization representative." DMAVA uses the title VSO for the meaning of "service organization representative." The appointment of an individual means an "agent" or "attorney." This distinction is important because the rules regulating organizations differ from the rules regulating individual agents or attorneys.<sup>5</sup>

### Accreditation of Representatives of Veteran Service Organizations

Once an organization is recognized by the Secretary, certifying officials of the organization may apply to have certain recommended individuals accredited to represent claimants. Accreditation is the authority granted by the Assistant General Counsel of the VA to representatives to assist veterans in the processing of their claims for veterans' benefits. A representative is a person who has been "recommended" by a recognized organization, such as DMAVA, and is accredited by the VA.

The accreditation process for service organization representatives, i.e., DMAVA VSOs, includes the filing of an application with the Office of the General Counsel of the VA for each individual that the organization recommends for accreditation on its behalf. In addition, the organization (DMAVA) must provide certification that the designee is of good character and reputation; that the designee has demonstrated an ability to represent claimants before the VA; and that the designee is employed by the organization.

In contrast, individual agents are required to pass a written examination with a score of 75 percent or higher in addition to proving good character and legal representation skills. Individual attorneys do not have to pass a written exam, but must provide certification of character, legal representation skills, and employment. As a further condition of accreditation, both individual agents and attorneys are required to certify that they have completed 3 hours of continuing legal education (CLE) within the first 12 months of initial accreditation. The CLE training must cover the following topics: representation before the VA, claims procedures, basic eligibility for VA benefits, rights to appeal, disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), and pensions.

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<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the discussion of representation is primarily limited to representatives of recognized organizations providing veteran service, such as DMAVA and while mentioned for comparative purposes, does not intend to address the laws authorizing and rules regulating individual attorney or agent representation of claimants. No individual may assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of claims for VA benefits as an agent or attorney unless he or she has first been accredited by the VA for such purposes.

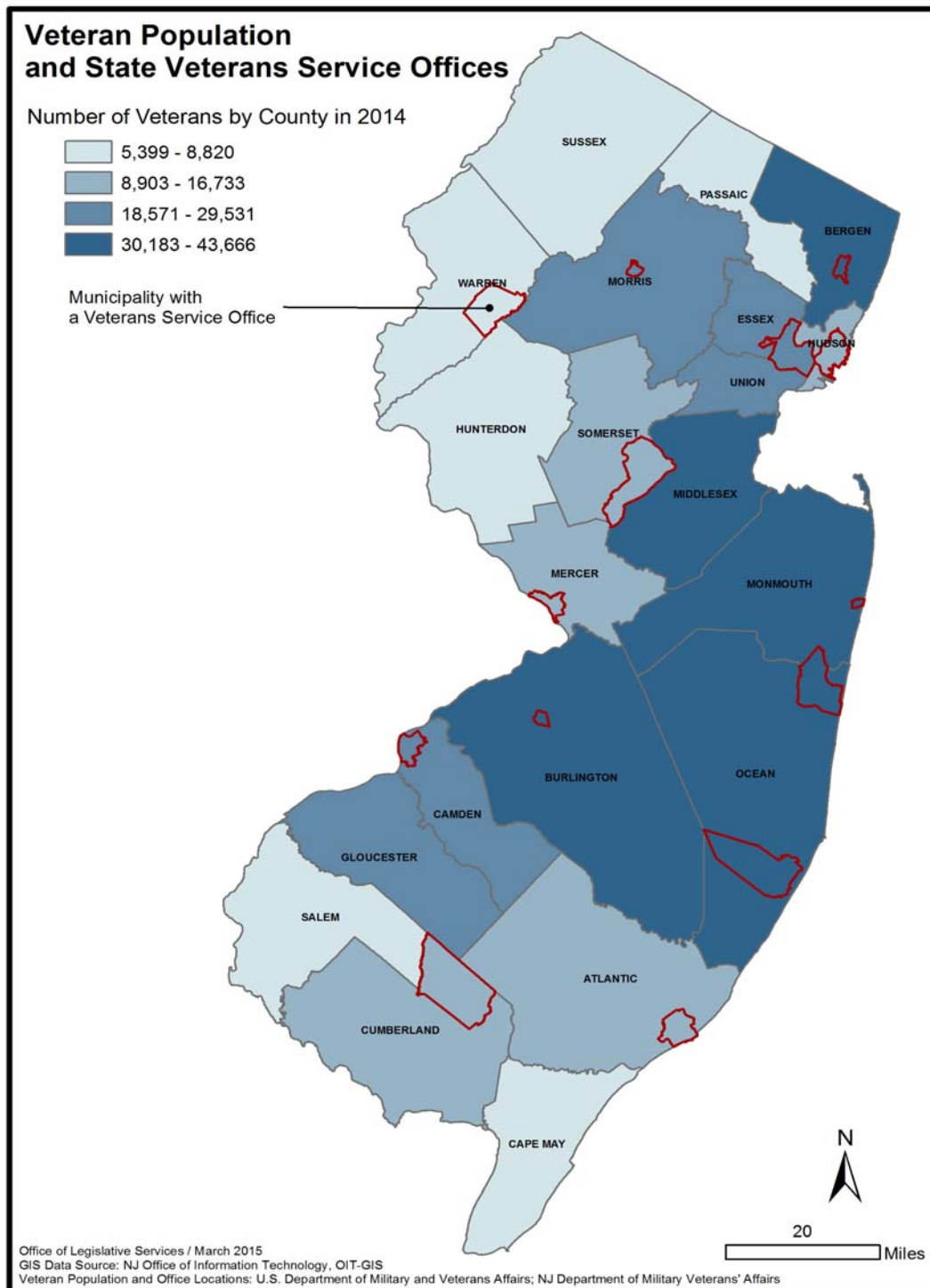
## **Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)**

### **DMAVA Veterans Service Officers**

The State's VSOs who staff and operate the 14 State veteran's service offices are charged with finding and helping military veterans living in New Jersey. A State VSO is a State employee of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. While not a requirement, VSOs are typically veterans. According to DMAVA, all VSOS have prior military service. Under civil service rules, veterans who apply for VSO positions receive civil service preference. Presently, all 16 State VSOs are veterans.



### Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)



## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

DMAVA VSO Locations			
VSO Location	County	VSOs	Admin. Support
Atlantic City	Atlantic	1	vacant
Hackensack	Bergen	1	1
Mount Holly	Burlington	1	1
Camden/Woodbury	Camden/Gloucester	2	1
Vineland	Cumberland	1	1
Neward/Union	Essex	2	1
Jersey City	Hudson	1	vacant
Lawrenceville	Mercer	1	1
Asbury Park	Monmouth	1	1
Dover	Morris	1	1
Stafford Township	Ocean	1	1
Brick township	Ocean	1	vacant
Franklin Township	Somerset	1	1
Mansfield Township	Warren	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>

In addition to being accredited by the VA as a veterans service organization representative, DMAVA VSOs are required to possess an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university. They must also be able to pass a federal background investigation in order to be authorized to have access to sensitive VA computer applications and databases and to perform the duties of power of attorney. VSOs are required to have a working knowledge of all applicable federal regulations and applicable State regulations. However, VSO "support staff" volunteers are not required to be accredited representatives.

In order to do their jobs, VSOs must have the ability to address current rules, regulations, changes, and trends in the veterans' benefit domain. They must have a thorough knowledge of federal and state laws, statutes, rules and regulations, and develop working relationships with applicable federal, state, and county departments and agencies. VSOs must also maintain a working relationship with various veterans organizations at county, district, and state levels, staff, volunteers, and news media; provide information regarding department (federal and state) programs and services; and perform field informational and claim visits to clients.

To accomplish this, DMAVA provides explicit training recommended by the VA for the VSOs. The training includes 16 hours (two eight-hour days) of CLE training per year. In addition, VSOs attend all VA sponsored annual training sessions, especially training for the implementation and application of new regulations. Most VSOs also take the National Veterans Legal Services class, which is a 40-hour correspondence class. The National Association of County Veteran Service Officers offers a similar legal services class.

### The Role of a DMAVA VSO

The mission of a DMAVA VSO is to ensure that military veterans receive the State and federal benefits to which they are entitled. The primary function of a VSO representing a veteran is to administer and manage claims through the benefits process. To accomplish this, VSOs help veterans navigate the complex architecture of the United States Department of

## **Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)**

Veterans Affairs (VA) and make them aware of additional State benefits for which they may be eligible such as tuition grants, property tax deductions, and post-traumatic stress disorder counseling.

Federal law requires veterans to authorize a VSO to represent them through the execution of a power of attorney. In addition, a statement signed by the representative and the claimant that no compensation will be charged or paid for the services rendered by the representative is required to be filed with the "agency of original jurisdiction." The "agency of original jurisdiction" means the VA activity or administration that made the initial determination on a claim or matter or that handles any subsequent adjudication of a claim or matter. The power of attorney identifies to the VA the claimant's appointment of representation and authorizes VA disclosure of information to the person representing the claimant.

### **Duties of a DMAMVA VSO: The Administration and Management of the Claims Process**

The administration and management of the claims process includes three steps: preparation, presentation, and prosecution. The preparation step entails gathering the information necessary to support a claim, filing the claim, and monitoring the claim through the adjudication process. The presentation step entails defending the claim or appeal before the VA, and the prosecution phase entails seeking to obtain the award of claims by filing appeals for any denied claims by legal action.

VSOs file new claims as well as reopen, review, and upgrade claims. They research and investigate prior claim decisions and review the findings and decisions for possible appeal. The various types of claims that VSOs administer include, but are not limited to:

- veterans' pension benefits (original and supplemental)
- disability pension benefits
- compensation
- dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC)
- healthcare benefits
- record requests
- debt waivers
- insurance
- state property tax deduction/exemption
- cemetery registration
- counseling (in-office and telephone)
- home loan guarantees
- transportation

In addition to the claims process, VSOs assist eligible claimants with discharge upgrades, obtaining VA healthcare, and eliminating veteran homelessness by placing homeless veterans in homes and shelters.

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

### County VSOs

Although each county in New Jersey may not have a VSO for its specific area, each county has a VSO representative. County VSOs are county employees and are not State VSOs employed by DMAVA. In addition to the County VSOs listed below, there is a VSO working as a VA liaison in the VA's Newark Regional office.

- Ventnor, Atlantic County
- Hackensack, Bergen County
- Mt. Holly, Burlington County
- Blackwood, Camden County
- Rio Grande, Cape May County
- Bridgeton, Cumberland County
- East Orange, Essex County
- Sewell, Gloucester County
- Jersey City, Hudson County
- Hamilton, Mercer County
- New Brunswick, Middlesex County
- Freehold, Monmouth County
- Morris Township, Morris County
- Toms River, Ocean County
- Totowa, Passaic County
- Salem, Salem County
- Somerville, Somerset County
- Stanhope, Sussex County
- Elizabeth, Union County
- Belvidere, Warren County

### VSOs in the United States

The National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) supports county offices across the country. NACVSO is a congressionally chartered organization recognized by the Secretary of the VA for the purpose of processing claims under the laws administered by the VA. NACVSO's mission is to "promote the rights of veterans and dependents of the United States through a progressive legislative platform and to work collaboratively with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other nationally chartered veterans organizations to assure that veterans and their dependents receive the entitlements they deserve for the sacrifices they endured." NACVSO was formed in 1989 by County Veterans Service Officers from eight states: California, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Indiana, Iowa, and Colorado. Since then NCVSO has grown to include 18 member states, including New Jersey. NACVSO works collaboratively with state departments of Military and Veterans' Affairs as well as county VSOs focusing on outreach, standardized quality training, and claims development and advocacy. NACVSO's employs approximately 2,400 employees from 28 states who work with the VA to administer claims and help veterans secure their service benefits.

### Value of VSOs

According to DMAVA, the State network of VSOs "are a major reason why federal VA benefits to New Jersey's veterans rose 130 percent from FY 2002 to FY 2012. The increase was made possible by DMAVA's emphasis on properly training the VSOs to focus their outreach efforts and to bring the maximum amount of benefits to the greatest number of veterans and their families." In FY 2013, the VA expended \$142.8 billion on veteran benefit claims for 21 million veterans living in the United States, or \$6,527 per veteran. Of that amount, \$1.9 billion was expended on veterans' benefits for 425,094 veterans living in New Jersey or \$4,533 per veteran living in New Jersey. While federal benefit awards in New Jersey more than doubled between FY 2002 and FY 2012, in FY 2013, VA expenditures per veteran living in New Jersey were lower than VA expenditures per veteran in any other state including DC,

**Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)**

Guam, and Puerto Rico. The national average *excluding* Puerto Rico and DC is \$6,354 per veteran.

The following tables provide state by state and New Jersey county by county comparisons of veterans benefits claims paid by the VA in FY 2013. It should be noted that the statistics in the charts below include all claims paid and include payments to veterans who were represented not only by DAMVA VSOs, but also other veteran service organization representatives, individual attorneys, individual agents, and other recognized, accredited individuals. The categories of claims include: compensation and pension, construction, education and vocation rehabilitation/employment, loan guarantees, general operating expenses, insurance and indemnities, and medical care.

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

FY 2013 Summary of VA Claims Expenditures by State								
(\$000s)								
State	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Average Expenditure per veteran		State	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Average Expenditure per veteran
Puerto Rico	99,928	\$ 1,387,777	\$ 13,888		Tennessee	521,267	\$ 3,320,710	\$ 6,370
West Virginia	173,389	\$ 1,601,256	\$ 9,235		Montana	101,597	\$ 646,509	\$ 6,363
Arkansas	250,095	\$ 1,946,615	\$ 7,783		New York	885,796	\$ 5,621,911	\$ 6,347
Texas	1,667,740	\$ 12,943,393	\$ 7,761		Massachusetts	374,809	\$ 2,371,613	\$ 6,328
New Mexico	170,699	\$ 1,312,943	\$ 7,692		Arizona	527,400	\$ 3,220,905	\$ 6,107
Ohio	877,894	\$ 6,643,911	\$ 7,568		Wyoming	56,518	\$ 343,611	\$ 6,080
Oklahoma	340,395	\$ 2,568,390	\$ 7,545		Missouri	497,874	\$ 3,025,845	\$ 6,078
South Dakota	75,687	\$ 564,489	\$ 7,458		Georgia	774,464	\$ 4,670,709	\$ 6,031
Nebraska	138,773	\$ 1,023,761	\$ 7,377		North Dakota	56,213	\$ 334,755	\$ 5,955
District of Columbia	31,166	\$ 2,295,599	\$ 7,365		Wisconsin	409,419	\$ 2,421,849	\$ 5,915
Guam	9,055	\$ 66,330	\$ 7,325		Utah	150,771	\$ 887,516	\$ 5,887
Oregon	322,355	\$ 2,283,129	\$ 7,083		Washington	602,272	\$ 3,384,110	\$ 5,619
California	1,795,455	\$ 12,707,536	\$ 7,077		Vermont	48,812	\$ 273,966	\$ 5,613
Louisiana	315,342	\$ 2,202,388	\$ 6,984		New Hampshire	110,778	\$ 613,805	\$ 5,541
Nevada	225,933	\$ 1,573,091	\$ 6,963		Maryland	443,076	\$ 2,453,557	\$ 5,538
Florida	1,520,563	\$ 10,430,774	\$ 6,860		Virginia	840,398	\$ 4,653,545	\$ 5,537
Rhode Island	69,206	\$ 474,338	\$ 6,854		Kansas	223,708	\$ 1,237,985	\$ 5,534
Maine	127,694	\$ 873,125	\$ 6,838		Idaho	138,108	\$ 746,018	\$ 5,402
South Carolina	420,968	\$ 2,876,324	\$ 6,833		Connecticut	207,759	\$ 1,078,567	\$ 5,191
Alabama	414,963	\$ 2,824,088	\$ 6,805		Illinois	744,710	\$ 3,854,717	\$ 5,176
Alaska	74,671	\$ 501,604	\$ 6,717		Iowa	233,815	\$ 1,192,889	\$ 5,102
Colorado	390,824	\$ 2,594,677	\$ 6,639		Michigan	660,773	\$ 3,361,961	\$ 5,088
North Carolina	769,384	\$ 5,067,823	\$ 6,587		Indiana	490,380	\$ 2,477,767	\$ 5,053
Kentucky	339,334	\$ 2,229,580	\$ 6,570		Pennsylvania	953,644	\$ 4,782,351	\$ 5,015
Mississippi	225,469	\$ 1,470,950	\$ 6,524		Delaware	78,016	\$ 362,617	\$ 4,648
Minnesota	360,754	\$ 2,336,965	\$ 6,478		<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>425,094</b>	<b>\$ 1,927,021</b>	<b>\$ 4,533</b>
Hawaii	116,947	\$ 754,680	\$ 6,453		<b>Total</b>	<b>21,882,153</b>	<b>\$ 142,822,345</b>	<b>\$ 6,527</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**Notes:**

1. \* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2013, are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary (VetPop 2011).
2. The Compensation & Pension expenditures include dollars for the following programs: veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities; dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths; veterans' pension for nonservice-connected disabilities; and burial and other benefits to veterans and their survivors.
3. Medical Care expenditures include dollars for medical services, medical administration, facility maintenance, educational support, research support, and other overhead items. Medical Care expenditures do not include dollars for construction or other non-medical support.
4. Medical Care expenditures are based on where patients live instead of where care is delivered.

At the county level in New Jersey, VA expenditures on veteran claims for benefits range from \$3,159 per veteran in Morris County to \$8,657 per veteran in Essex County.

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

## Counties

FY13 Summary of VA Claims Expenditures by County in New Jersey							
Expenditures in \$000s							
County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditures	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care
ATLANTIC	17,174	\$ 65,026	\$ 36,560	\$ 6,557	\$ -	\$ 1,471	\$ 20,438
BERGEN	33,590	\$ 138,677	\$ 63,225	\$ 17,468	\$ -	\$ 6,099	\$ 51,885
BURLINGTON	33,670	\$ 180,391	\$ 111,015	\$ 26,352	\$ -	\$ 2,537	\$ 40,488
CAMDEN	30,510	\$ 139,164	\$ 77,312	\$ 12,890	\$ -	\$ 2,305	\$ 46,658
CAPE MAY	8,741	\$ 30,607	\$ 19,436	\$ 1,970	\$ -	\$ 1,014	\$ 8,187
CUMBERLAND	9,117	\$ 35,536	\$ 20,069	\$ 2,368	\$ -	\$ 463	\$ 12,636
ESSEX	26,070	\$ 225,698	\$ 62,528	\$ 17,720	\$ 14,756	\$ 3,282	\$ 120,835
GLOUCESTER	20,065	\$ 81,522	\$ 45,711	\$ 6,830	\$ -	\$ 1,164	\$ 27,818
HUDSON	15,693	\$ 78,764	\$ 30,721	\$ 16,208	\$ -	\$ 1,179	\$ 30,656
HUNTERDON	7,099	\$ 25,766	\$ 11,548	\$ 1,876	\$ -	\$ 1,166	\$ 11,177
MERCER	17,267	\$ 60,272	\$ 32,281	\$ 7,135	\$ -	\$ 2,188	\$ 18,669
MIDDLESEX	31,612	\$ 132,453	\$ 59,106	\$ 15,221	\$ -	\$ 4,152	\$ 53,974
MONMOUTH	33,438	\$ 124,451	\$ 67,933	\$ 11,538	\$ -	\$ 5,707	\$ 39,272
MORRIS	23,381	\$ 73,861	\$ 31,434	\$ 7,656	\$ -	\$ 4,190	\$ 30,580
OCEAN	45,053	\$ 184,226	\$ 105,258	\$ 12,103	\$ -	\$ 5,872	\$ 60,992
PASSAIC	17,436	\$ 71,317	\$ 28,936	\$ 10,093	\$ -	\$ 2,722	\$ 29,566
SALEM	5,534	\$ 19,873	\$ 10,347	\$ 1,342	\$ -	\$ 183	\$ 8,001
SOMERSET	13,416	\$ 87,322	\$ 23,682	\$ 3,786	\$ 1,112	\$ 2,050	\$ 56,691
SUSSEX	9,097	\$ 33,919	\$ 15,997	\$ 3,177	\$ -	\$ 611	\$ 14,135
UNION	19,481	\$ 112,335	\$ 40,246	\$ 11,393	\$ -	\$ 3,005	\$ 57,691
WARREN	7,648	\$ 25,842	\$ 13,399	\$ 2,432	\$ -	\$ 635	\$ 9,376
<b>NEW JERSEY</b>	<b>425,094</b>	<b>\$ 1,927,021</b>	<b>\$ 906,744</b>	<b>\$ 196,113</b>	<b>\$ 15,868</b>	<b>\$ 51,994</b>	<b>\$ 749,724</b>

Source: Department of U.S. Veterans Affairs

**Notes:**

- 1.\* Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2013, are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary (VetPop 2011).
2. The Compensation & Pension expenditures include dollars for the following programs: veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities; dependency and indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths; veterans' pension for nonservice-connected disabilities; and burial and other benefits to veterans and their survivors.
3. Medical Care expenditures include dollars for medical services, medical administration, facility maintenance, educational support, research support, and other overhead items. Medical Care expenditures do not include dollars for construction or other non-medical support.
4. Medical Care expenditures are based on where patients live instead of where care is delivered.

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

### Value and Volume of Claims: Pending and completed claims information for DMAVA VSOs.

According to DMAVA, the four main categories that the VA compensates veterans in cases where DMAVA VSOs are acting as a power of attorney on behalf of a claimant are death compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation, death pension, live compensation and live pension claims. Death compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation claims represent claims for survivors of veterans who died of a service connected disability. In FY 2013, these claims accounted for 9 percent of compensation. Death pension claims represent claims for widows whose spouse died of a non-service connected disability. In FY 2013, these claims accounted for 3 percent of compensation. Live compensation is service connected and can include, but is not limited to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, wounds of combat, hearing loss, amputees, and agent orange claims. In FY 2013, these claims accounted for 83 percent of compensation. Live pension claims represent claims for non-service connected disability and also aid and attendance claims. In FY 2013, these claims accounted for 5 percent of compensation. From FY 2009 through FY 2014, DMAVA VSOs secured a total of \$667.8 million in federal benefits for New Jersey veterans, representing an increase in benefits awarded of 111 percent over five years. The benefits claims awarded included claims for live compensation, live pension, death compensation/DIC, and death pension. The claims were for cases where DMAVA VSOs had power of attorney.

Federal Benefits Awarded to Veterans Represented by DMAVA VSOs FY 2009 to FY 2014	
Fiscal Year	Benefits Awarded
FY 2014	\$ 152,758,821
FY 2013	\$ 133,396,827
FY 2012	\$ 122,019,581
FY 2011	\$ 107,244,314
FY 2010	\$ 80,123,710
FY 2009	\$ 72,213,623
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 667,756,876</b>

The table below illustrates the volume of claims administered and managed in 2014 for all of New Jersey.

New Jersey Claims Administered by the VA		
2014		
Claim Time Period	Pending Claims	Completed Claims
<b>2014</b>		
31-Mar-14	4,411	4,218
28-Jun-14	2,941	2,602
27-Sep-14	2,954	2,233
27-Dec-14	3,247	1,537

Source: Veterans Benefits Administration Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity, United States Department of Veterans Affairs.



## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

The table below illustrates the volume of claims administered and managed from 2010 to 2014 for all of New Jersey.

New Jersey Claims Administered by the VA		
2010 to 2013		
2010-2013	Claims Pending	Percent Pending over 125 days
23-Mar-13	3609	53.60%
22-Jun-13	3498	45.60%
21-Sep-13	3893	53.40%
28-Dec-13	4213	58.40%
24-Mar-12	4720	58.10%
23-Jun-12	4577	51.80%
22-Sep-12	4432	56.10%
22-Dec-12	4155	58.00%
28-Mar-11	4877	54.70%
27-Jun-11	4638	50.80%
24-Sep-11	4478	52.30%
23-Dec-11	4570	55.90%
29-Mar-10	3423	42.00%
26-Jun-10	3399	33.80%
27-Sep-10	3789	31.40%
27-Dec-10	4775	38.70%

Source: Veterans Benefits Administration Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity, United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Note: Prior to 2014 and after 2009, data collected did not include completed claims, but rather was presented as percent pending over 125 days.

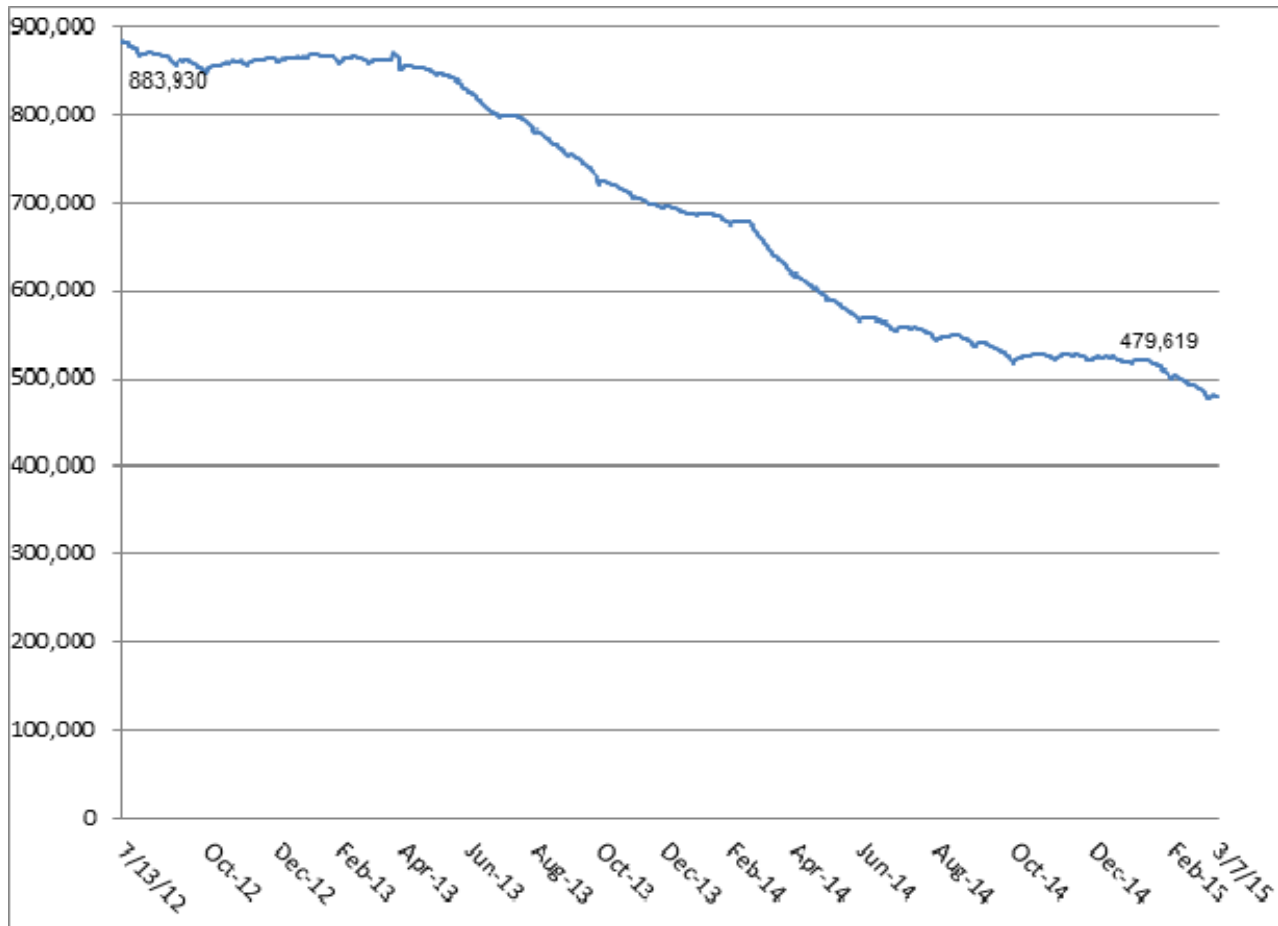
### VA National Claims Inventory

According to the VA, the VA claims inventory nationally includes disability compensation and pension claims received by the VA that require a rating decision. This includes claims for disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors, and veterans' pension benefits, including both original and supplemental claims. The claims inventory includes disability compensation and pension claims that have been received by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and that require development and a decision by a VBA claims processor. Once the VA decides a claim, it is no longer accounted for in the claims inventory. If a veteran appeals a benefits decision, the appealed claim is tracked separately.

The VA Claims Inventory chart below shows that the total number of pending claims declined from July 2012 to March 2015 by 404,311 claims, or 45.7 percent. According to the VA, the VBA currently serves about 4 million Veterans who receive compensation and pension benefits. "In the past four years, VBA added more than 940,000 Veterans to the VBA compensation rolls, more than the active duty Army and Navy combined. More than three million claims were processed in the past three fiscal years, three times the amount completed in 2000. Quality is also increasing as quality ratings were up 4 percent in the past year, reversing a four-year decline."

## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

### VA National Claims Inventory: Total Number of Pending Claims



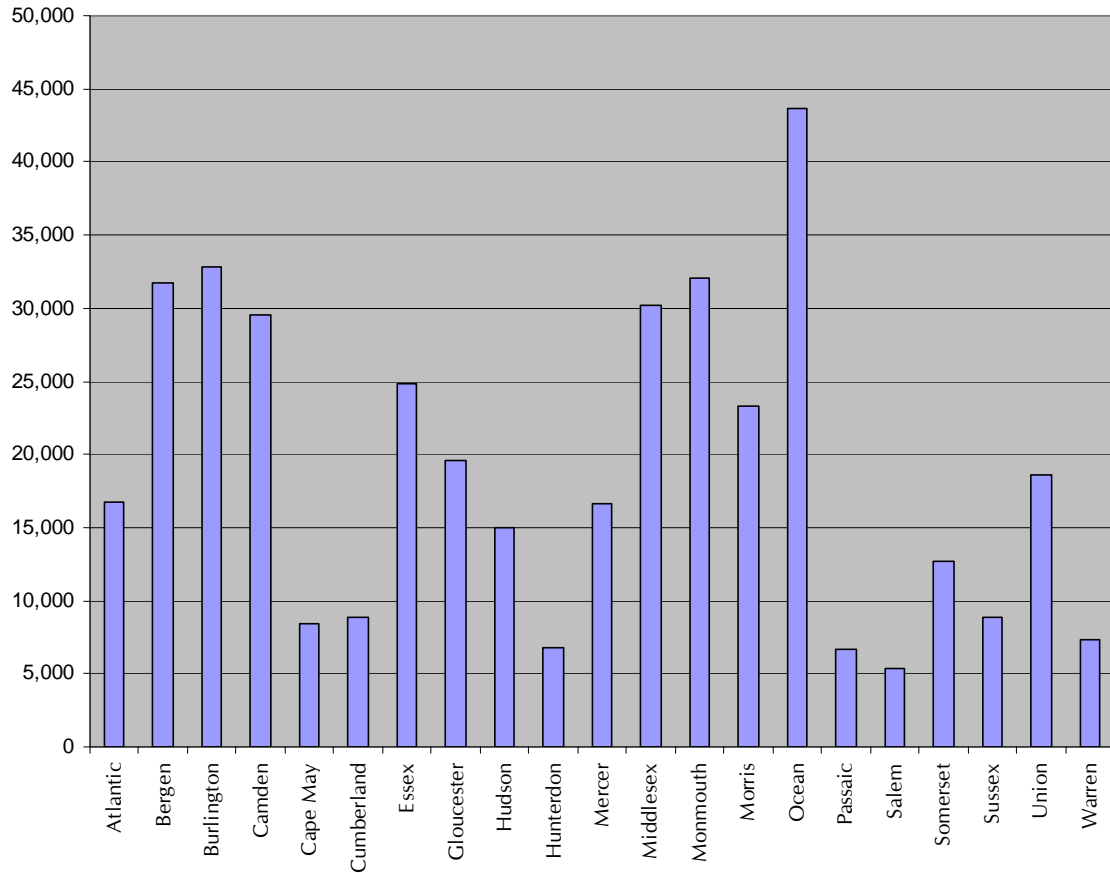
United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration Reports.  
Includes disability compensation and pension claims that have been received by VA that requires development and a decision by a VA claims processor.

### New Jersey Veteran Population

According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, as of 2013, there were 425,994 veterans living in New Jersey. As the chart below illustrates, the largest veteran population in New Jersey lives in Ocean County followed by Burlington, Bergen, Monmouth, Middlesex and Camden counties with veteran populations ranging from 30,510 to 33,670. Essex, Morris, Gloucester, and Union counties have veteran populations ranging from 26,070 to 19,481. Passaic, Atlantic, Mercer, Hudson, and Somerset counties have veteran populations ranging from 17,436 to 13,416. The remaining counties have veteran populations below 10,000.

**Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)**

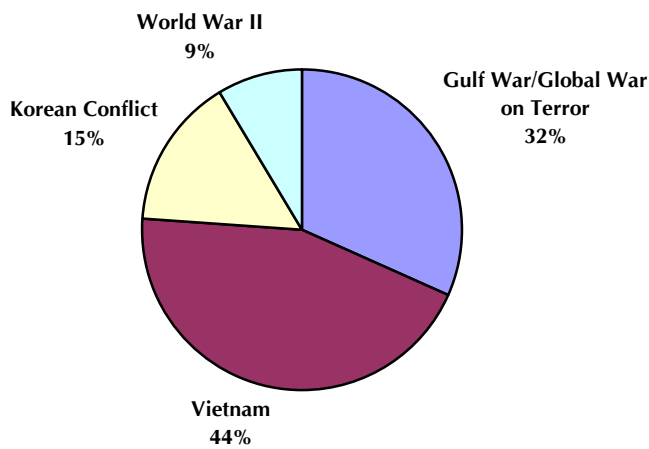
New Jersey Veterans Population by County



## Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

Data from the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) indicates that approximately 73 percent of the veterans living in New Jersey represent wartime veterans and 27 percent represent peacetime veterans. Of the wartime veterans still living in New Jersey, approximately 32 percent served in the Gulf War and the Global War on Terror, 44 percent served in Vietnam, 15 percent served in the Korean Conflict, and 9 percent served in WWII.

**New Jersey Veteran Wartime Population Distribution  
2014**



## OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The Office of Legislative Services provides nonpartisan assistance to the State Legislature in the areas of legal, fiscal, research, bill drafting, committee staffing and administrative services. It operates under the jurisdiction of the Legislative Services Commission, a bipartisan body consisting of eight members of each House. The Executive Director supervises and directs the Office of Legislative Services.

The Legislative Budget and Finance Officer is the chief fiscal officer for the Legislature. The Legislative Budget and Finance Officer collects and presents fiscal information for the Legislature; serves as Secretary to the Joint Budget Oversight Committee; attends upon the Appropriations Committees during review of the Governor's Budget recommendations; reports on such matters as the committees or Legislature may direct; administers the fiscal note process and has statutory responsibilities for the review of appropriations transfers and other State fiscal transactions.

The Office of Legislative Services Central Staff provides a variety of legal, fiscal, research and administrative services to individual legislators, legislative officers, legislative committees and commissions, and partisan staff. The central staff is organized under the Central Staff Management Unit into ten subject area sections. Each section, under a section chief, includes legal, fiscal, and research staff for the standing reference committees of the Legislature and, upon request, to special commissions created by the Legislature. The central staff assists the Legislative Budget and Finance Officer in providing services to the Appropriations Committees during the budget review process.

Individuals wishing information and committee schedules on the FY 2016 budget are encouraged to contact:

**Legislative Budget and Finance Office  
State House Annex  
Room 140 PO Box 068  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
(609) 847-3105 • Fax (609) 777-2442**