

ANALYSIS OF THE NEW JERSEY BUDGET

**DEPARTMENT OF
MILITARY AND
VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

FISCAL YEAR

2017-2018

NEW JERSEY STATE LEGISLATURE

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DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Budget Pages..... C-6, C-13 to C-14, C-21, C-25, C-26
D-277 to D-290

Fiscal Summary (\$000)

	Expended FY 2016	Adjusted Appropriation FY 2017	Recommended FY 2018	Percent Change 2017-18
State Budgeted	\$105,264	\$97,554	\$95,678	(1.9%)
Federal Funds	42,170	72,129	72,130	.0%
<u>Other</u>	<u>1,012</u>	<u>4,708</u>	<u>4,705</u>	<u>(.1%)</u>
Grand Total	\$148,446	\$174,391	\$172,513	(1.1%)

Personnel Summary - Positions By Funding Source

	Actual FY 2016	Revised FY 2017	Funded FY 2018	Percent Change 2017-18
State	1,257	1,214	1,214	—
Federal	147	151	151	—
<u>Other</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>—</u>
Total Positions	1,404	1,365	1,365	—

FY 2016 (as of December) and revised FY 2017 (as of January) personnel data reflect actual payroll counts. FY 2018 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 programs and services for the 413,188¹ 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 2018 Governor's Budget recommends \$172.5 million, or an overall reduction of 1.1 percent, in total funding for the operation and support of the department. This total consists of \$95.7 million in State funds; \$72.1 million in federal funds; and \$4.7 million in Other Funds. Compared to FY 2017, State funds decrease by about \$1.9 million (-1.9 percent). Federal and Other Funds decrease by insignificant amounts. Current staffing levels appear to be unaffected by funding reductions. The department indicates that federal and other funds will be available to partially replace State funding cuts.

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, 2017, the Army and Air National Guard will be at 102 percent and 108 percent, respectively, of their authorized strength. It further projects that it will largely maintain those levels in FY 2018, with a two percentage point reduction expected in the Army National Guard strength to 100 percent and a one percentage point increase to the Air National Guard to 109 percent.

- FY 2018 State appropriations are recommended to decline by 2 percent to \$7.872 million. Federal funds of about \$55 million are projected to continue federal support for the New Jersey National Guard (\$44 million) and major ongoing construction projects (\$11 million for photovoltaic projects and the Regional Training Center at Sea Girt).

Services to Veterans

¹ Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (2015).

Highlights (Cont'd)

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 service offices throughout the State. These offices assist veterans and their dependents to secure State and federal benefits. Evaluation data indicates that the department will serve an estimated 92,000 veterans in FY 2018; provide 23,000 veterans' transportation trips; provide 20,000 post-traumatic stress disorder counseling sessions; house 160 homeless veterans; process 9,000 claims; and perform 3,092 burials.

- The FY 2018 Governor's Budget recommends continued federal funding of \$5 million for continued improvements to the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans' Memorial Cemetery including the realignment of grave markers and the rehabilitation of graves as well as the planning, design, and construction of additional in-ground burial site sections.

Veterans' Memorial Homes

The department owns and operates three veterans' memorial homes that provide long-term care, medical care, and nursing services to eligible veterans of all wars living in New Jersey who served on active duty and were honorably discharged. The veterans' memorial homes are located in Menlo Park, Paramus, and Vineland. The homes are inspected and licensed annually by the New Jersey Department of Health and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

- The FY 2018 Governor's budget recommends funding of \$78.4 million to support an average of 920 resident veterans in the budget year, essentially the same level of funding as in FY 2017.

Background Paper

New Jersey Veterans Service Officers.....p. 10

Fiscal and Personnel Summary

AGENCY FUNDING BY SOURCE OF FUNDS (\$000)

	Expended FY 2016	Adj. Approp. FY 2017	Recom. FY 2018	Percent Change	
				2016-18	2017-18
<u>General Fund</u>					
Direct State Services	\$98,928	\$94,890	\$93,264	(5.7%)	(1.7%)
Grants-In-Aid	2,340	2,664	2,414	3.2%	(9.4%)
State Aid	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Capital Construction	3,996	0	0	(100.0%)	0.0%
Debt Service	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Sub-Total	\$105,264	\$97,554	\$95,678	(9.1%)	(1.9%)
<u>Property Tax Relief Fund</u>					
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%
Sub-Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
<u>Casino Revenue Fund</u>					
	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
<u>Casino Control Fund</u>					
	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
State Total	\$105,264	\$97,554	\$95,678	(9.1%)	(1.9%)
<u>Federal Funds</u>					
	\$42,170	\$72,129	\$72,130	71.0%	0.0%
<u>Other Funds</u>					
	\$1,012	\$4,708	\$4,705	364.9%	(0.1%)
Grand Total	\$148,446	\$174,391	\$172,513	16.2%	(1.1%)

PERSONNEL SUMMARY - POSITIONS BY FUNDING SOURCE

	Actual FY 2016	Revised FY 2017	Funded FY 2018	Percent Change	
				2016-18	2017-18
State	1,257	1,214	1,214	(3.4%)	0.0%
Federal	147	151	151	2.7%	0.0%
All Other	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Positions	1,404	1,365	1,365	(2.8%)	0.0%

FY 2016 (as of December) and revised FY 2017 (as of January) personnel data reflect actual payroll counts. FY 2018 data reflect the number of positions funded.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DATA

Total Minority Percent	66.6%	67.7%	N/A	----	----
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Significant Changes/New Programs (\$000)

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp. FY 2017</u>	<u>Recomm. FY 2018</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Budget 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

Salaries and Wages	\$3,765	\$3,615	(\$ 150)	(4.0%)	D-281
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This budget item funds salaries and wages for the staff engaged in operational command, control, and support of the State National Guard, 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 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 4 percent, or \$150,000 in salary funding for Administration and Support Services, resulting in a funding level for salaries and wages adequate to support the same number of full-time equivalent positions as there were in FY 2017.

Services Other Than Personal	\$1,151	\$1,126	(\$ 25)	(2.2%)	D-281
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This budget item funds operating expenses for National Guard Support Services central operations such as travel, telephone service, 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 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 2.2 percent, or \$25,000 from the discontinuation of most of the cable services and televisions at headquarters, for example, in the cafeteria and most offices.

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

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

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp.</u> <u>FY 2017</u>	<u>Recomm.</u> <u>FY 2018</u>	<u>Dollar</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>Page</u>
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Assistance, Veterans Haven, Burial Services, and the three Veterans' Memorial Homes: Menlo Park, Paramus, and Vineland. The department operates over 16 State Veteran Service Offices (VSOs) that assist veterans and their dependents secure State and federal benefits.

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

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp. FY 2017</u>	<u>Recomm. FY 2018</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Budget Page</u>
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Direct State Services

Salaries and Wages	\$5,388	\$5,123	(\$ 265)	(4.9%)	D-284
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This budget line item funds salaries and wages for the support of veterans programs including veterans outreach and assistance, Veterans' Haven and Burial Services. The FY 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 4.9 percent, or \$265,000 reflecting decreases in salary funding for Veterans' Haven and Burial Services by \$190,000 and \$75,000 respectively. Budget evaluation data (Page D-283) estimate no impact from this reduction on staffing levels. According to the department, the reduction will be offset by available funding from the federal United States Department of Veterans Affairs (federal DVA).

Materials and Supplies	\$763	\$615	(\$ 148)	(19.4%)	D-284
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The FY 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 19.4 percent, or 148,000, in Materials and Supplies for Veterans' Haven (\$53,000) and Burial Services (\$95,000). This reduction reflects an increase in federal DVA cemetery plot internment allowances, and in the collection of federal DVA per diem receipts for Veterans' Haven South, as well as the availability of prior year unexpended balances.

Services Other Than Personal	\$419	\$351	(\$ 68)	(16.2%)	D-284
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The Services Other Than Personal appropriation provides funding for various treatment services to residents at Veterans' Haven North and Veterans Haven South for alcohol and drug dependency, depression, and other mental health problems. In addition, the appropriation pays for advertising for outreach services that the department provides and for various other outreach activities such as stand downs and mall activities.

The FY 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 16.2 percent, or \$68,000. This reduction reflects a projected increase in the collection of federal DVA per diem receipts for Veterans' Haven South, and a reduction in the outreach advertising budget resulting from the department's change in outreach strategy. The department is shifting its outreach strategy from advertising on buses and billboards to more traditional efforts such as stand downs, which provide supplies and services to homeless veterans including health screenings, food, clothing, and benefits counseling, and mall visits to distribute medals to veterans in an effort to reach more veterans in need.

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

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp. FY 2017</u>	<u>Recomm. FY 2018</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Budget Page</u>
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Payment of Military

Leave Benefits	\$150	\$75	(\$ 75)	(50.0%)	D-284
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This appropriation provides State funding to counties, municipalities, and boards of education that apply to the State Treasurer for the reimbursement of payments they made to reservists for military leave. Under current law, reservists are entitled to a leave of absence for up to 30 days from their respective jobs without a loss of pay or time for days in which they are engaged in field training and active military service. Public employees who are members of the State militia (which consists of the New Jersey Air and Army National Guard, Naval Militia, and State Guard) are entitled to a leave of absence for up to 90 days of paid leave from their respective jobs without a loss of pay or time for days in which they are engaged in active duty or active duty training. This reduction anticipates fewer applications for reimbursement due to the recent downward trend in deployments. Applications are processed and paid on a rolling basis, so any application not reimbursed in any given year remains in line and eligible for reimbursement the following year.

Veterans' State

Benefits Bureau	\$130	\$110	(\$ 20)	(15.4%)	D-284
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The New Jersey Veterans' State Benefits Bureau provides veterans and their dependents with information and guidance in filing claims. Trained veterans service officers at the Veteran Service Offices also assist veterans with issues pertaining to employment, education, burial, counseling, housing, social, and medical services. This appropriation funds the salary of a management position and related expenses. The FY 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 15.4 percent, or \$20,000 resulting in a funding level adequate to support the position.

Honor Guard

Support Services	\$373	\$348	(\$ 25)	(6.7%)	D-284
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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 laws and regulations. The FY 2018 Governor's Budget recommends a reduction of 6.7 percent, or \$25,000, to a funding level adequate to support a smaller Honor Guard of four or five members.

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

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Adj. Approp. FY 2017</u>	<u>Recomm. FY 2018</u>	<u>Dollar Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Budget Page</u>
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VETERANS' MEMORIAL HOMES

The department owns and operates three veterans' memorial homes that provide long-term care, medical care, and nursing services to eligible veterans of all wars living in New Jersey who served on active duty and were honorably discharged. The veterans' memorial homes are located in Menlo Park, Paramus, and Vineland. The homes are inspected and licensed annually by the New Jersey Department of Health and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Direct State Services

Additions, Improvements and Equipment:

Menlo Park Veterans' Memorial Home	\$114 \$551 S	\$114	(\$ 551)	(82.9%)	D-286
Paramus Veterans' Memorial Home	\$ 41 \$299 S	\$41	(\$ 299)	(87.9%)	D-287

Each reduction represents a recurring supplemental appropriation from prior year revenues from United States 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 40 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

There are no significant languages changes recommended for the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs.

EXPLANATION: FY 2017 language not recommended for FY 2018 denoted by strikethrough.
Recommended FY 2018 language that did not appear in FY 2017 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 regulations² 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 claims³ for benefits⁴.

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

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ Benefit means any payment, service, commodity, function, or 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)

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 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.⁵

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.

⁵ 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 referencing them 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.

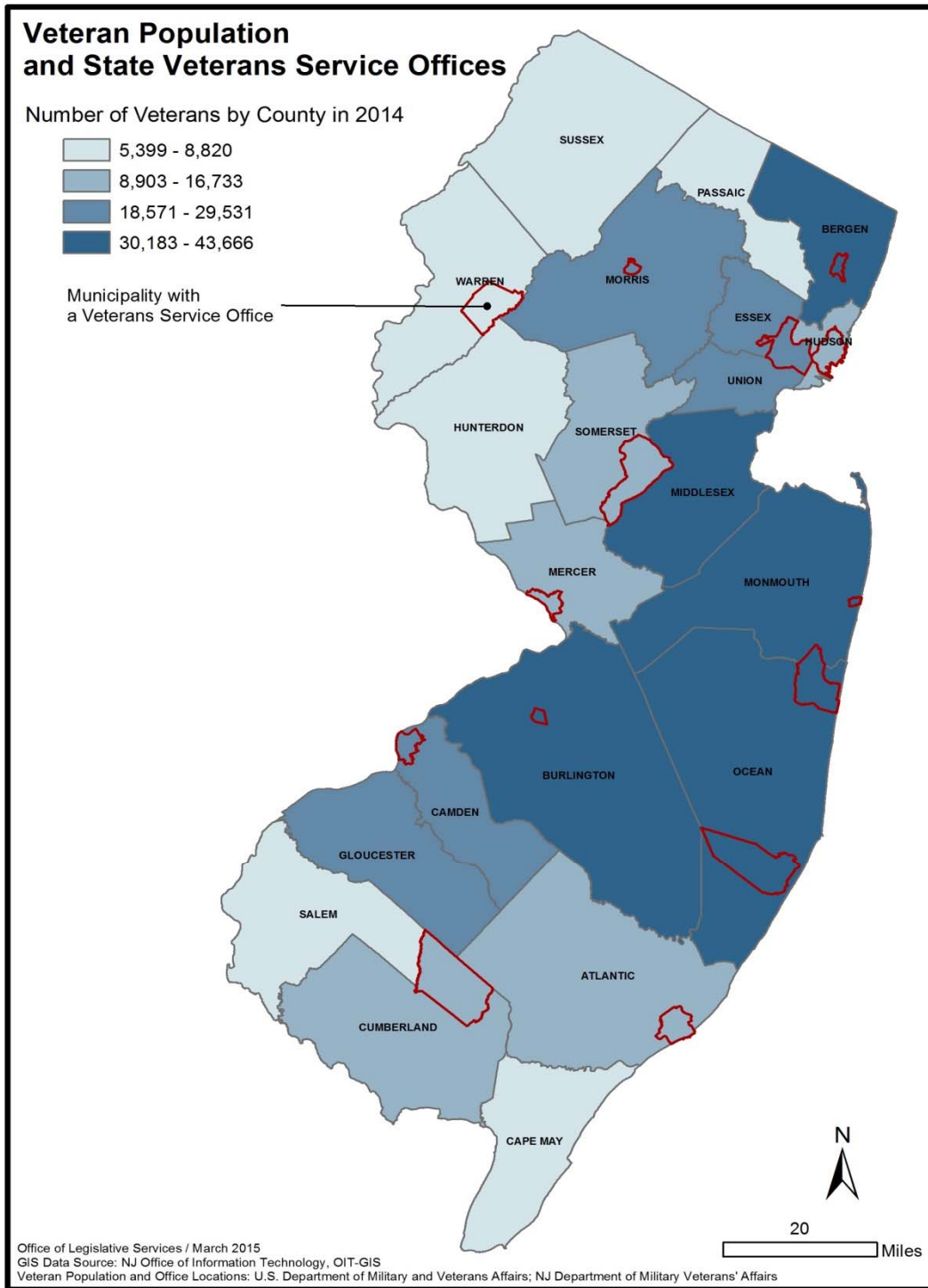
Background Paper: New Jersey Veterans Service Officers (Cont'd)

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.

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. At present, 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	VSO's	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
Newark/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
Total		16	11

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.

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

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 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 DMAVA 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

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

- 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.

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 ensure 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

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

2,400 employees from 28 states who work with the VA to administer claims and help veterans secure their service benefits.

Value of VSOs

Federal VA benefits to New Jersey's veterans rose 123 percent from FY 2002 to FY 2015. DMAVA trains 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 2015, the VA expended \$167.2 billion on veteran benefit claims for 21.6 million veterans living in the United States, or \$7,749 per veteran. Of that amount, \$2.157 billion was expended on veterans' benefits for 413,188 veterans living in New Jersey or \$5,221 per veteran living in New Jersey. While federal benefit awards in New Jersey more than doubled between FY 2002 and FY 2015, in FY 2015, VA expenditures per veteran living in New Jersey were lower than VA expenditures per veteran in every other state as well as DC, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The national average *excluding* Puerto Rico and DC is \$7,578 per veteran.

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

The following tables provide state by state and New Jersey county by county comparisons of veteran's benefits claims paid by the VA and other VA expenditures in FY 2015. 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 DMAVA VSOs, but also other veteran service organization representatives, individual attorneys, individual agents, and other recognized, accredited individuals. The categories of claims included in expenditures are: compensation and pension, construction, education and vocation rehabilitation/employment, loan guarantees, general operating expenses, insurance and indemnities, and medical care.

FY15 Summary of Expenditures by State							
Total Expenditures in \$000s - Average Expenditures Per Veteran (\$)							
State	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Average Expenditure per Veteran	State	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Average Expenditure per Veteran
District of Columbia	29,470	\$ 2,960,157	\$ 100,445	Kentucky	328,408	\$ 2,501,383	\$ 7,617
Puerto Rico	90,395	\$ 1,602,762	\$ 17,731	Georgia	752,499	\$ 5,705,037	\$ 7,581
West Virginia	165,709	\$ 1,896,031	\$ 11,442	Utah	150,904	\$ 1,118,885	\$ 7,415
Guam	9,493	\$ 89,961	\$ 9,476	Hawaii	120,482	\$ 888,037	\$ 7,371
South Dakota	71,736	\$ 666,733	\$ 9,294	Massachusetts	367,531	\$ 2,693,536	\$ 7,329
Ohio	848,124	\$ 7,699,529	\$ 9,078	Minnesota	361,129	\$ 2,637,124	\$ 7,302
Oklahoma	335,905	\$ 3,003,074	\$ 8,940	Missouri	488,220	\$ 3,556,661	\$ 7,285
Texas	1,675,262	\$ 14,812,595	\$ 8,842	New York	862,805	\$ 6,284,863	\$ 7,284
New Mexico	170,132	\$ 1,499,350	\$ 8,813	Arizona	528,486	\$ 3,757,596	\$ 7,110
Arkansas	247,888	\$ 2,174,053	\$ 8,770	Virginia	783,108	\$ 5,424,411	\$ 6,927
Wyoming	49,838	\$ 426,957	\$ 8,567	Vermont	47,664	\$ 324,118	\$ 6,800
Colorado	409,469	\$ 3,482,533	\$ 8,505	Wisconsin	405,729	\$ 2,756,150	\$ 6,793
Nevada	225,073	\$ 1,885,151	\$ 8,376	North Dakota	57,086	\$ 386,285	\$ 6,767
South Carolina	417,515	\$ 3,484,527	\$ 8,346	Idaho	132,334	\$ 893,404	\$ 6,751
Nebraska	141,213	\$ 1,171,266	\$ 8,294	Washington	598,460	\$ 4,004,526	\$ 6,691
California	1,802,446	\$ 14,938,931	\$ 8,288	Maryland	430,446	\$ 2,866,923	\$ 6,660
North Carolina	773,884	\$ 6,380,720	\$ 8,245	Kansas	218,416	\$ 1,415,559	\$ 6,481
Louisiana	326,229	\$ 2,658,351	\$ 8,149	New Hampshire	111,389	\$ 702,720	\$ 6,309
Oregon	326,338	\$ 2,627,979	\$ 8,053	Illinois	705,582	\$ 4,395,048	\$ 6,229
Alaska	73,276	\$ 584,863	\$ 7,982	Iowa	227,991	\$ 1,397,551	\$ 6,130
Mississippi	218,980	\$ 1,739,068	\$ 7,942	Connecticut	206,549	\$ 1,249,124	\$ 6,048
Tennessee	503,675	\$ 3,977,481	\$ 7,897	Michigan	640,865	\$ 3,856,572	\$ 6,018
Alabama	411,717	\$ 3,248,127	\$ 7,889	Indiana	469,210	\$ 2,787,066	\$ 5,940
Montana	99,034	\$ 780,685	\$ 7,883	Pennsylvania	916,638	\$ 5,432,718	\$ 5,927
Florida	1,558,441	\$ 12,276,149	\$ 7,877	Delaware	77,354	\$ 422,278	\$ 5,459
Maine	125,078	\$ 982,591	\$ 7,856	New Jersey	413,188	\$ 2,157,162	\$ 5,221
Rhode Island	69,862	\$ 545,538	\$ 7,809	Totals	21,578,655	\$ 167,209,900	\$ 7,749

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Notes:

1. Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2015 are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary.

Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

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

At the county level in New Jersey, VA expenditures on veteran claims for benefits range from \$3,542 per veteran in Morris County to \$9,685 per veteran in Essex County. Essex and Somerset are top-ranked New Jersey counties because they host the main campuses of the VA New Jersey Health Care Systems, in East Orange and Lyons (Bernards Township).

Counties

FY15 Summary of Expenditures by State										
Expenditures in \$000s										
County	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditure	Average Expenditures per Veteran	Compensation & Pension	Construct.	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
ATLANTIC	17,102	\$ 76,567,579	\$ 4,477	\$ 42,913	\$ -	\$ 7,053	\$ -	\$ 1,718	\$ 24,884	3,105
BERGEN	32,246	\$ 148,293,858	\$ 4,599	\$ 69,264	\$ -	\$ 18,082	\$ -	\$ 6,988	\$ 53,960	6,512
BURLINGTON	33,091	\$ 215,797,056	\$ 6,521	\$ 132,496	\$ 42	\$ 27,398	\$ 3,382	\$ 2,919	\$ 49,560	6,199
CAMDEN	29,724	\$ 160,726,251	\$ 5,407	\$ 91,337	\$ -	\$ 13,130	\$ -	\$ 3,195	\$ 53,065	5,684
CAPE MAY	8,590	\$ 35,682,700	\$ 4,154	\$ 23,068	\$ -	\$ 1,721	\$ -	\$ 1,034	\$ 9,860	1,620
CUMBERLAND	9,200	\$ 41,138,508	\$ 4,471	\$ 21,988	\$ -	\$ 2,923	\$ -	\$ 505	\$ 15,723	1,755
ESSEX	24,595	\$ 238,214,222	\$ 9,685	\$ 66,721	\$ 5,005	\$ 18,710	\$ 14,217	\$ 3,194	\$ 130,367	6,468
GLOUCESTER	19,597	\$ 97,144,437	\$ 4,957	\$ 56,573	\$ -	\$ 7,044	\$ -	\$ 1,270	\$ 32,257	3,810
HUDSON	15,176	\$ 86,252,213	\$ 5,683	\$ 33,711	\$ -	\$ 15,905	\$ -	\$ 992	\$ 35,644	2,985
HUNTERDON	6,703	\$ 32,218,605	\$ 4,806	\$ 13,228	\$ -	\$ 1,676	\$ -	\$ 920	\$ 16,395	952
MERCER	16,731	\$ 67,024,431	\$ 4,006	\$ 36,460	\$ -	\$ 6,621	\$ -	\$ 2,325	\$ 21,620	2,126
MIDDLESEX	30,715	\$ 140,224,465	\$ 4,565	\$ 64,384	\$ -	\$ 17,468	\$ -	\$ 3,404	\$ 54,968	5,257
MONMOUTH	32,259	\$ 140,768,095	\$ 4,364	\$ 77,890	\$ -	\$ 13,938	\$ -	\$ 4,421	\$ 44,519	5,088
MORRIS	22,370	\$ 79,237,993	\$ 3,542	\$ 36,005	\$ -	\$ 8,110	\$ -	\$ 3,436	\$ 31,687	3,235
OCEAN	44,775	\$ 206,338,349	\$ 4,608	\$ 117,768	\$ -	\$ 13,383	\$ -	\$ 4,368	\$ 70,819	9,763
PASSAIC	17,028	\$ 77,528,824	\$ 4,553	\$ 34,089	\$ -	\$ 9,648	\$ -	\$ 1,943	\$ 31,849	3,017
SALEM	5,527	\$ 24,346,315	\$ 4,405	\$ 12,393	\$ -	\$ 1,376	\$ -	\$ 202	\$ 10,375	899
SOMERSET	12,667	\$ 103,950,429	\$ 8,206	\$ 26,955	\$ -	\$ 4,536	\$ 1,071	\$ 2,132	\$ 69,256	2,490
SUSSEX	9,034	\$ 39,481,814	\$ 4,370	\$ 18,441	\$ -	\$ 3,631	\$ -	\$ 701	\$ 16,709	1,531
UNION	18,691	\$ 115,463,959	\$ 6,177	\$ 44,986	\$ -	\$ 12,367	\$ -	\$ 2,700	\$ 55,412	3,787
WARREN	7,366	\$ 30,761,781	\$ 4,176	\$ 15,837	\$ -	\$ 2,755	\$ -	\$ 672	\$ 11,498	1,035
NEW JERSEY	413,188	\$ 2,157,161,886	\$ 5,221	\$ 1,036,506	\$ 5,047	\$ 207,474	\$ 18,670	\$ 49,039	\$ 840,426	77,318

Source: Department of U. S. Veterans Affairs.

Notes:

- * Veteran population estimates, as of September 30, 2015, are produced by the VA Office of the Actuary (VetPop 2014).
- ** Unique patients are patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility. Data are provided by the Allocation Resource Center (ARC).
- Expenditure data sources: USA Spending.gov for Compensation & Pension (C&P) and Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (EVRE) Benefits; Veterans Benefits Administration Insurance Center for the Insurance costs; the VA Financial Management System (FMS) for Construction, Medical Research, General Operating Expenses, and certain C&P and Readjustment data; and the Allocation Resource Center (ARC) for Medical Care costs.
- 1. Expenditures are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars. For example, \$500 to \$1,000 are rounded to \$1; \$0 to \$499 are rounded to \$0; and "\$ -" = 0 or no expenditures.
- 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 allocated to the patient's home location, not the site of care.

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 2015, these claims accounted for 9 percent of

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

compensation. Death pension claims represent claims for widows whose spouse died of a non-service connected disability. In FY 2015, these claims accounted for 1 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 2015, these claims accounted for 85 percent of compensation. Live pension claims represent claims for non-service connected disability and also aid and attendance claims. In FY 2015, these claims accounted for 5 percent of compensation. From FY 2009 through FY 2016, DMAVA VSOs secured a total of \$1.002 billion in federal benefits for New Jersey veterans. FY 2016 benefits of \$173.1 million represent an increase in benefits awarded of 140 percent over seven years. The benefits claims awarded included claims for live compensation, live pension, death compensation/DIC, and death pension. The claims were for cases in which DMAVA VSOs had power of attorney.

Federal Benefits Awarded to Veterans Represented by DMAVA VSOs FY 2009 to FY 2016	
Fiscal Year	Benefits Awarded
FY 2016	\$ 173,076,736
FY 2015	\$ 161,209,895
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
Total	\$ 1,002,043,507

Source: N.J. Dept. of Military and Veterans' Affairs

The tables below illustrate the volume of claims DMAVA VSOs administered and managed from FY 2014 through FY 2016. Beginning in FY 2015 the Veterans Benefits Administration Office of Performance Analysis and Integrity (VBA) no longer reports pending and completed claims; instead the VBA reports only claims filed.

Claims Administered by DMAVA FY 2015 and FY 2016	
Fiscal Year	Claims Filed
FY 2016	10,190
FY 2015	8,804

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)

Claims Administered by DMAVA		
2014		
Claim Time Period	Pending Claims	Completed Claims
2014		
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 DMAVA VSOs administered and managed from December 27, 2010 through March 23, 2013. On average, during each quarter, DMAVA VSOs are handling approximately 260 claims each. About 50 percent of the claims take more than four months to complete, indicating the complexity of the work of a VSO.

Claims Administered by DMAVA		
2010 to 2013		
2010-2013	Claims Pending	Percent Pending over 125 days
23-Mar-13	3,609	53.60%
22-Jun-13	3,498	45.60%
21-Sep-13	3,893	53.40%
28-Dec-13	4,213	58.40%
24-Mar-12	4,720	58.10%
23-Jun-12	4,577	51.80%
22-Sep-12	4,432	56.10%
22-Dec-12	4,155	58.00%
28-Mar-11	4,877	54.70%
27-Jun-11	4,638	50.80%
24-Sep-11	4,478	52.30%
23-Dec-11	4,570	55.90%
29-Mar-10	3,423	42.00%
26-Jun-10	3,399	33.80%
27-Sep-10	3,789	31.40%
27-Dec-10	4,775	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

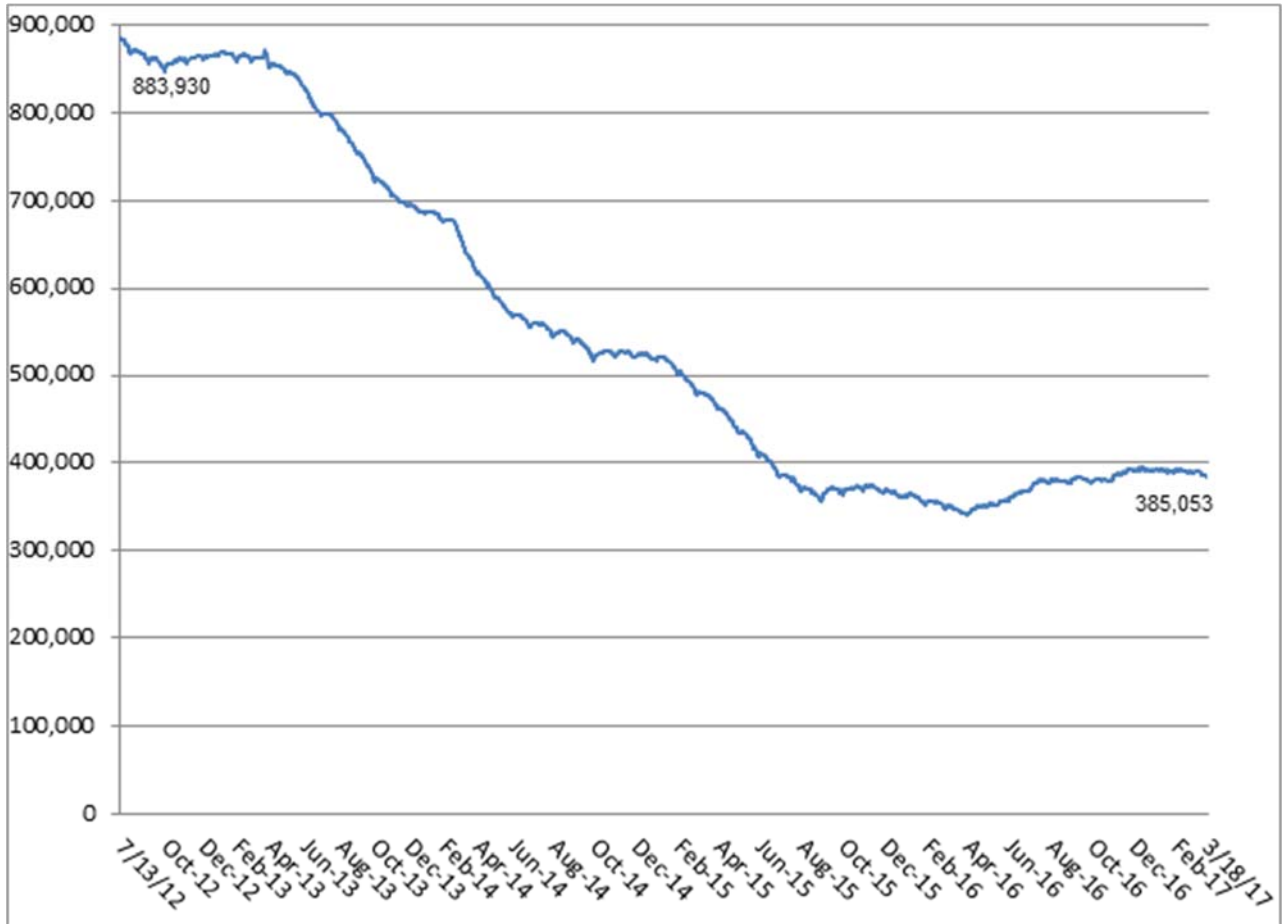
According to the VA, the VA claims inventory nationally includes disability compensation and pension claims received by the VA that require a rating decision. This includes claims for disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors, and veterans' pension benefits, including 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.

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

The VA Claims Inventory chart below shows that the total number of pending claims declined from July 2012 to March 2017 by 498,877 claims, or 56.4 percent. According to the VA, VBA currently serves nearly 4.5 million veterans who receive either compensation or pension benefits. "In the past four years alone, VBA has added more than one million Veterans to its compensation rolls, which is more than the active duty Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard combined. In fiscal year 2015, VBA delivered over \$63.5 billion in Veterans' compensation and pension benefits." Increased efforts by the VBA and State VSOs, to make sure veterans received the benefits due to them, have improved the completed claims rate.

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

VA National Claims Inventory: Total Number of Pending Claims



Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration Reports.

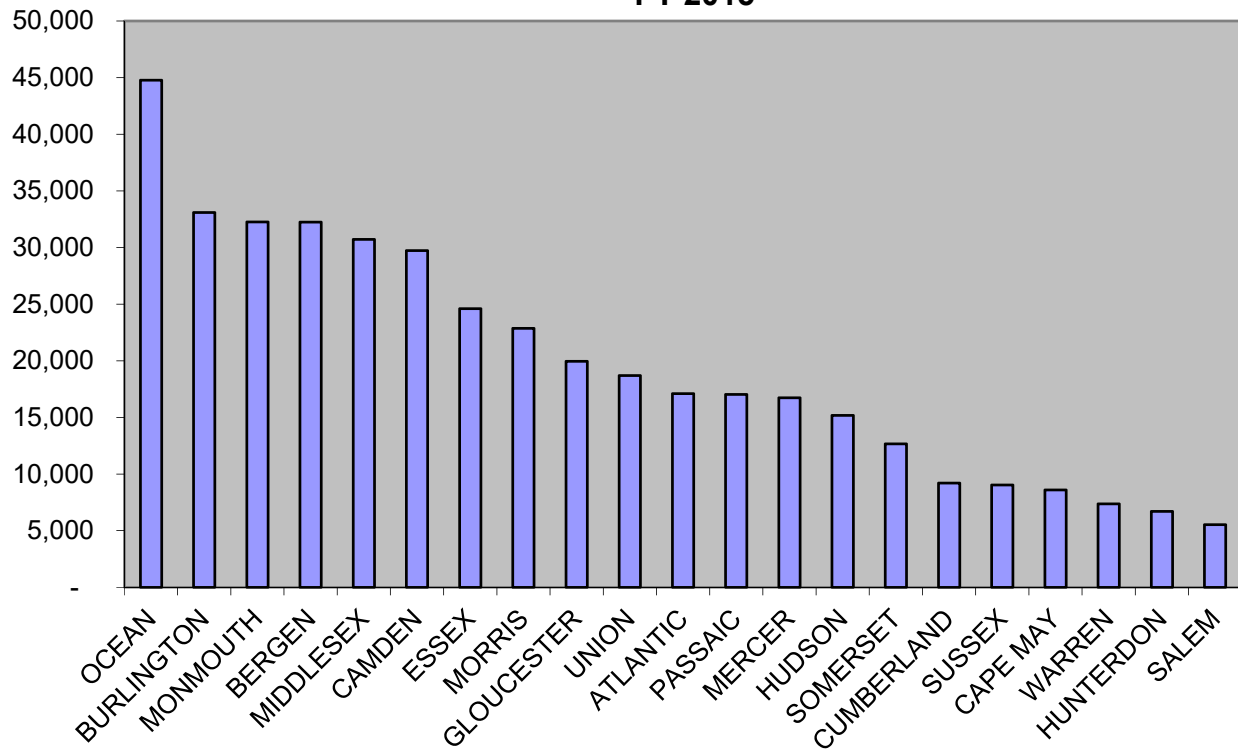
Includes disability compensation and pension claims that have been received by VA that requires development and a decision by a VA claims processor

New Jersey Veteran Population

According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, as of 2015, there were 413,188 veterans living in New Jersey. As the chart below illustrates, the largest veteran population in New Jersey is in Ocean County followed by Burlington, Monmouth, Bergen, Middlesex and Camden counties with veteran populations in those large counties ranging from 29,724 in Camden County to 44,773 in Ocean County. Essex, Morris, Gloucester, and Union counties have veteran populations ranging from 18,691 to 24,595. Atlantic, Passaic, Mercer, Hudson, and Somerset counties have veteran populations ranging from 12,667 to 17,102. The remaining counties have veteran populations below 10,000.

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

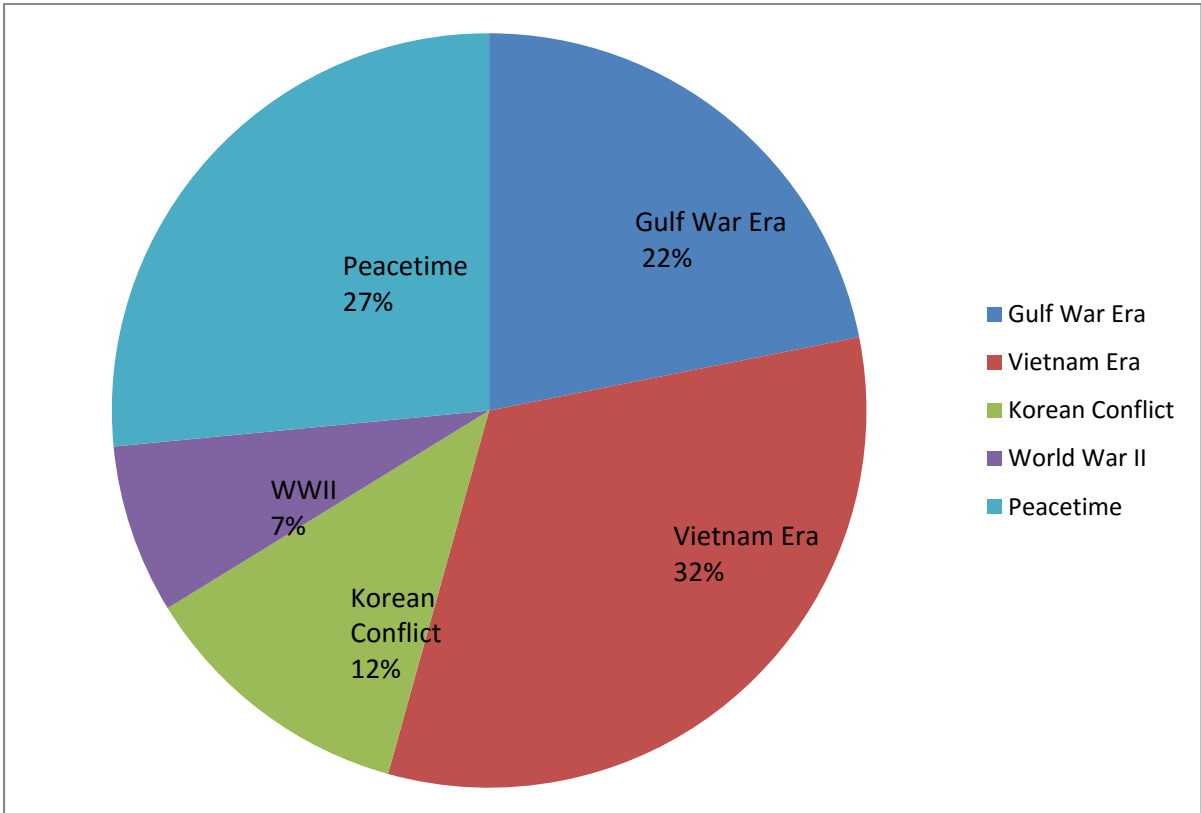
**Veterans as a Percent of Total Population by County
FY 2015**



Data from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration Reports 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 22 percent served in the Gulf War and the Global War on Terror, 32 percent served in Vietnam, 12 percent served in the Korean Conflict, and 7 percent served in WWII.

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

**New Jersey Veteran Wartime Population Distribution
FY 2015**



Source: United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration Reports.

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.

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Individuals wishing information and committee schedules on the FY 2018 budget are encouraged to contact:

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