

VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
OF  
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

*Andrew C. Tangen, Superintendent*



# Annual Report

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Fiscal Year 2023

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December 29, 2023

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker  
Governor of Illinois  
State Capital Room 207  
Springfield, IL 62706-0001

Dear Governor Pritzker,

It is with great pleasure that I present you with the annual report of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County, Illinois, pursuant to Chapter 330, Part 45, Section 8 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes.

As the foremost Veteran advocacy agency in Illinois' 2nd most Veteran populous county, we provide services in the following categories:

- 1) Financial Assistance
- 2) Veterans Advocacy
- 3) Partnerships

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Commission was instrumental in securing an estimated \$18,608,800.01 in new benefits for Lake County Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This means the Commission has, in effect, brought in nearly fourteen times its budget in new monies to Lake County during the fiscal year.

These new benefits represent an economic impact to the County of Lake of approximately \$93,044,000.05. That amount does not consider money that we helped our Veterans save by assisting them in accessing VA health care, home loan, or education benefits. Consequently, the Commission continues to be a significant and judicious governmental entity at the county level and continues to have an extremely positive impact on the economy of Lake County.

Thank you for your support of our county's Veterans. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Very truly yours,

Andrew C. Tangen, JD, MBA, MS  
Superintendent

## Glossary of Terms

**Compensation:** See “Disability Compensation”

**Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC):** A tax-free monetary benefit paid to eligible survivors of military service members who died in the line of duty or eligible survivors of Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

**Disability Compensation:** A tax-free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury incurred in or aggravated during active military service.

**Functional Zero:** A goal that is reached when the number of Veterans experiencing homelessness within a community is less than the average number of Veterans being connected with permanent housing each month.

**Intent-to-File:** An application for Veterans and survivors who intend to file a claim for VA compensation, pension, or survivors’ benefits which preserves the effective date of future benefits while the claimant is gathering supporting documentation for their formal claim.

**Non-Service-Connected Pension:** See “Pension”

**Pension:** A tax-free needs-based monetary benefit paid to wartime Veterans, who meet certain age or non-service-connected disability requirements.

**Pension Management Center:** A department at certain VA Regional Offices that is responsible for processing and adjudicating claims for pension, survivor’s pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, and burial benefits.

**Regional Office:** One of 56 VA offices located nationwide responsible for processing and adjudicating VA benefits which primarily includes disability compensation.

**Superintendent:** The executive powers of the Veterans Assistance Commission vest within this individual and that individual acts as the Chief Veterans Advocate for the Veterans of the County.

**Survivor’s Pension:** A tax-free needs-based monetary benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased wartime Veteran.

**VA Health Care:** A comprehensive medical benefits package available to qualifying Veterans which includes primary and specialty care at VA hospitals and clinics.

**Veterans Service Officer:** An individual who is accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs who assists Veterans and their dependents in the filing of claims, and advocacy for, benefits with the VA.

**Work/Study Student:** A Veteran student who is using VA education benefits and is paid by the VA to do VA related work at no cost to the County.

## **Veterans Assistance Commission Delegates and Alternates 2023**

**President Nicholas G. Konz** – Mundelein American Legion Post 867  
**Vice-President Thomas Marciciak** – Lake Zurich American Legion Post 964  
**Chaplain Marie Honeywell** – Lake Zurich Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 110  
**Sergeant at Arms George Gandara** – Libertyville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8741  
**Executive Committee Larry Klauser** – Mundelein American Legion Post 867  
**Executive Committee John DeReu** – Military Officers Association of America  
**Executive Committee Paul Hettich** – Antioch American Legion Post 748  
**Executive Committee Paul Baumunk** – Lake Villa Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4308  
**Executive Committee Allan Ayers** – Marine Corps League 1395  
**Delegate Paul Hettich** – Antioch American Legion Post 748  
**Alternate Jay Jozwiah** – Antioch American Legion Post 748  
**Delegate Fred Schaffer** – Barrington American Legion Post 158  
**Delegate John Reid** – Deerfield American Legion Post 738  
**Delegate Ted Rock** – Grayslake American Legion Post 659  
**Delegate James Huisel** – Gurnee American Legion Post 771  
**Alternate Peter Mockapetris** – Gurnee American Legion Post 771  
**Delegate Larry Sassorossi** – Highland Park American Legion Post 145  
**Alternate Richard Lee, Jr.** – Highland Park American Legion Post 145  
**Delegate Richard Gordon** – Highwood American Legion Post 501  
**Delegate Duane Percy** – Homer Dahringer American Legion Post 281  
**Delegate David Bentley** – Lake Bluff American Legion Post 510  
**Alternate David Cimarrusti** – Lake Bluff American Legion Post 510  
**Delegate Robert Gabriel** – Lakes Region American Legion Post 703  
**Alternate Lizbeth Risely** – Lakes Region American Legion Post 703  
**Delegate Tom Marciciak** – Lake Zurich American Legion Post 964  
**Alternate Richard Johnson** – Lake Zurich American Legion Post 964  
**Delegate Ernest Chan** – Libertyville American Legion Post 329  
**Alternate David Sears** – Libertyville American Legion Post 329  
**Delegate Patricia Simmons** – McKinlock American Legion Post 264  
**Alternate Troy Goodes** – McKinlock American Legion Post 264  
**Delegate Larry Klauser** – Mundelein American Legion Post 867  
**Alternate Ed Hacket** – Mundelein American Legion Post 867  
**Delegate Edward Hickey** – Round Lake Park American Legion Post 1170  
**Delegate Donald Nickerson** – Samuel Schiera American Legion Post 1943  
**Delegate Lester Deanes** – Sharvin American Legion Post 1943  
**Delegate James Schultz** – Vernon Hills American Legion Post 1247  
**Alternate William Wagner** – Vernon Hills American Legion Post 1247  
**Delegate Donald Castella** – Wauconda American Legion Post 911  
**Alternate William Geary** – Wauconda American Legion Post 911  
**Delegate James Duncan** – Zion Benton American Legion Post 865  
**Delegate Paul Hettich** – Antioch Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4551  
**Alternate Paul Swanson** – Antioch Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4551  
**Delegate Lalena Magnosta** – Grayslake Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2245  
**Alternate Warren Sundberg** – Grayslake Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2245

**Delegate David Kunz** – Highland Park Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4737  
**Alternate Chris Thomas** – Highland Park Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4737  
**Delegate Tom Schmit** – Highwood Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4741  
**Delegate Marie Honeywell** – Major Syverson III Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2486  
**Alternate Barry Desfor** – Major Syverson III Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2486  
**Delegate Paul Baumunk** – Lake Villa Veterans of Foreign War Post 4308  
**Alternate Patrick Dunham** – Lake Villa Veterans of Foreign War Post 4308  
**Delegate George Gandara** – Libertyville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8741  
**Alternate Bernard J Voit** – Libertyville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8741  
**Delegate Randy Schenck** – Mundelein Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7191  
**Delegate Joseph Heim** – Northshore Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4737  
**Alternate Chris Brennan** – Northshore Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4737  
**Delegate Cheryl Reed** – Ron Hill Memorial Veterans of Foreign War Post 2245  
**Delegate Raymond Rigsby** – Winthrop Harbor Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7448  
**Alternate Christine Pawley** – Winthrop Harbor Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7448  
**Delegate John Shebenik** – American Veterans Post 35  
**Delegate Oliver Davidson** – Marine Corps League 801  
**Delegate Allan Ayers** – Marine Corps League 1395  
**Alternate Stan Villarreal** – Marine Corps League 1395  
**Delegate John DeReu** – Military Officers Association of America  
**Alternate Carter Bell** – Military Officers Association of America  
**Delegate Eliseo Lee Lopez** – Military Order of the World Wars  
**Alternate John DeReu** – Military Order of the World Wars  
**Delegate Frank Relmer** – Military Order of the Purple Heart Post 323  
**Delegate Donald Nickerson** – Polish League of American Veterans Post 25  
**Delegate Art Dutkovic** – Reserve Officers Association of America Chapter 48  
**Alternate Paul Hettich** – Reserve Officers Association of America Chapter 48  
**Delegate Michael Zimmerman** – Jewish War Veterans North Shore Post 29  
**Alternate Martin Rockwell** - Jewish War Veterans North Shore Post 29  
**Delegate Christine Pawley** – Disabled American Veterans Chapter 16  
**Delegate David Christensen** – Team Red, White, and Blue<sup>1</sup>  
**Alternate Mark Helm** – Team Red, White, and Blue<sup>1</sup>  
**Delegate Paul Hettich** – United States Army Reserve<sup>1</sup>  
**Delegate Stan Villarreal** – Vietnam Veterans of America

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<sup>1</sup> Not Congressionally Chartered Veteran Service Organizations. These represent community partners who are members for information purposes only. Members of these entities do not vote in Commission matters

## **The Mission of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County**

*To promote the welfare of honorably discharged Veterans of military service and their families through maximizing all possible benefits through effective and dynamic advocacy and by serving as a central service office for all Veterans residing in the County of Lake.*

This mission is accomplished through three key areas:

- 1) Financial Assistance
- 2) Advocacy
- 3) Partnerships

## **The Staff of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County**

The Staff of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County (hereinafter “the Commission”) is currently comprised of Superintendent Andrew C. Tangen; Assistant Superintendent John L. Murray; Senior Veteran Service Officers (SVSO) Shane McNerney and Jilian “Summer” Padoan; Veteran Service Officers (VSO) Allan Lacson and Jonathan Kellogg, Executive Assistant Suzette Pawluk, and Administrative Assistants Racheal Burke and Anthony “Tony” Roberti.

The Commission added two Veteran Service Officers at the end of fiscal year 2023: Aloysius “Ali” Nelson who, upon retiring from the US Navy after 28 years of service as a Command Master Chief, served 12 years as Director of Veteran Services in two (2) separate Counties in Wisconsin and is a past president of the Wisconsin State Association of County Veteran Service Officers; and, Keeyawnia “K.C.” Hawkins, who served as a Paralegal in the US Army for six (6) years separating from active duty as a Sergeant. She became a Veteran Advocate in 2011 and has worked at a variety of locations which include the Columbia (SC) VA Regional Office, Olin Teague (TX) VA Medical Center, and Bell County, Texas as a VSO. Both Ali and KC are Certified Veteran Advocates, the highest qualification a VSO can obtain.

Next fiscal year, the Commission will add two (2) additional VSOs, one (1) Paralegal, and one (1) administrative assistant.

In last year's report, the Commission discussed its desire to reopen office space at the James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) and increasing services for pre-separation discharge assistance at the Great Lakes Naval Station. The Commission is happy to report that it has secured two office spaces at the FHCC where we will be able to see veterans at FHCC and assist FHCC staff in any benefits work that may be needed for veterans who are in one of the numerous inpatient programs at FHCC. In addition, the Commission continues to provide needed advocacy on US Naval Station Great Lakes for active duty members preparing to discharge or retire from active service.

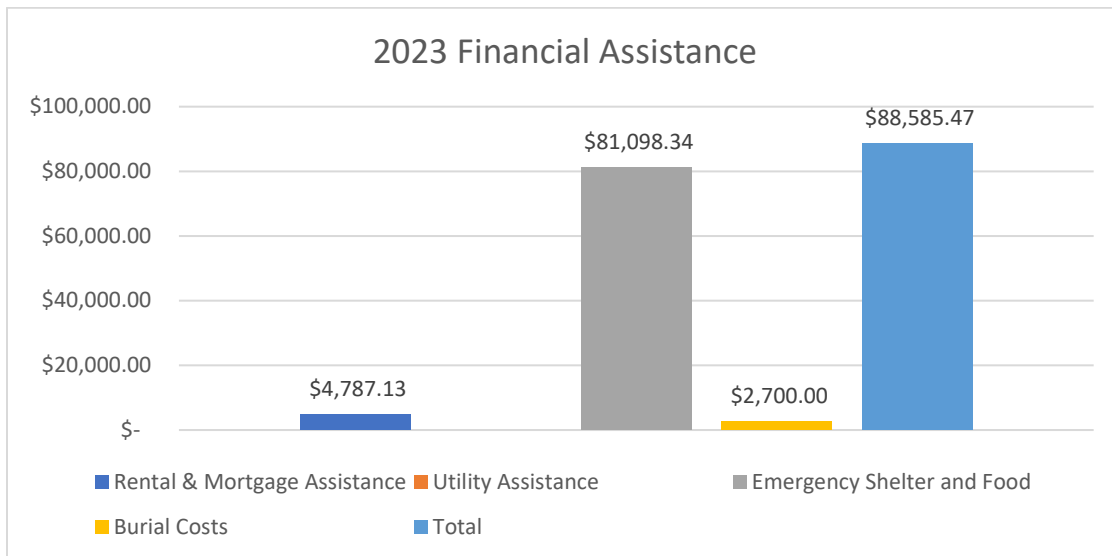
Three Commission employees were elected and continue to serve in positions of leadership at the National level: the Commission Superintendent was elected as the First Vice President of the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO); the Assistant Superintendent was elected as the Judge Advocate for NACVSO; and new hire KC Hawkins is currently serving as Secretary for NACVSO.

Commission employees continue to lead at the State level through the Illinois Association of County Veteran's Assistance Commissions (IACVAC) with the Superintendent continuing to serve as President of IACVAC, the Assistant Superintendent continuing to serve as First Division Vice President, and SVSO's Summer Padoan and Shane McNerney continuing to serve on the IACVAC Education Committee.



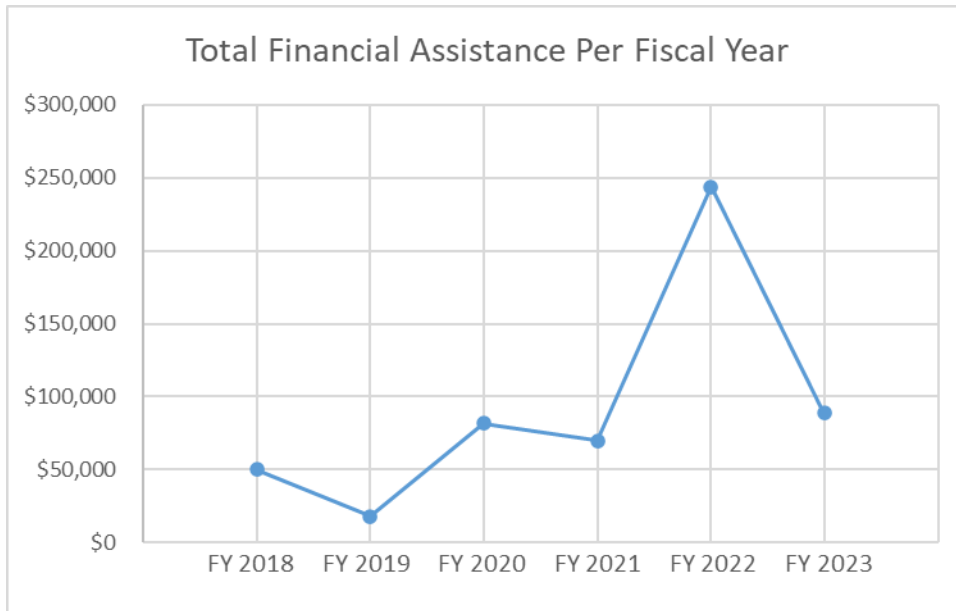
## Financial Assistance

The Commission provides financial assistance, available to all honorably discharged Veterans of the County, including, but not limited to: rental and mortgage assistance; utility payments; aid to the medically indigent; assistance and emergency shelter to homeless Veterans, those Veterans in danger of becoming homeless, and those Veterans displaced by natural disasters; and, burial assistance of indigent Veterans.

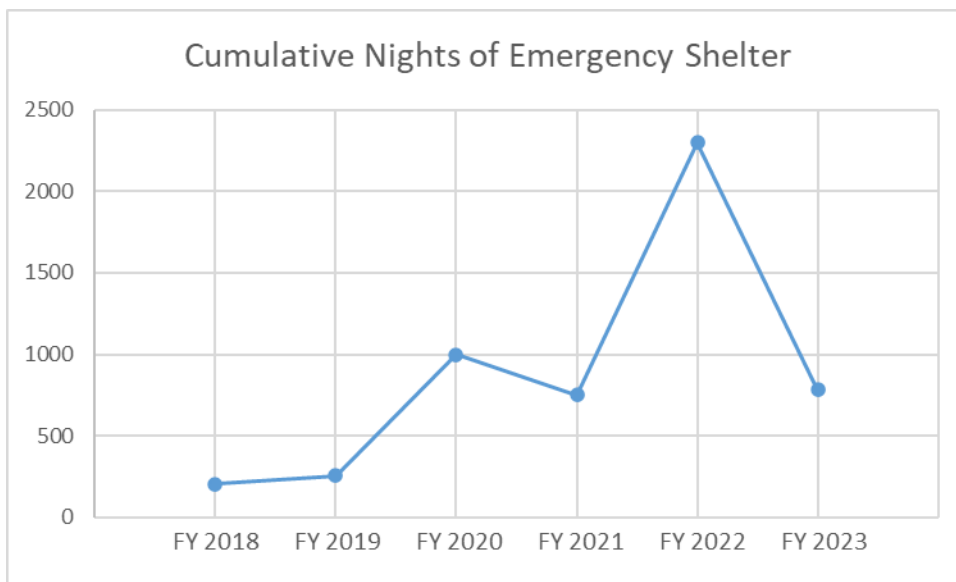


This year, the Commission provided \$88,585.47 in financial assistance, representing: \$4,787.13 in rental and mortgage assistance; \$81,098.34 in emergency shelter and meals to indigent Veterans and their families, representing just over 780 cumulative nights of hotel stays; and \$2,700 in burial costs for indigent Veterans.

The Commission worked tirelessly with the Captain James A. Lovell FHCC Homeless Program and other community partners to address many of the issues identified in last years report, and is excited to announce that the programs which started this fiscal year with these partners appear to have had a positive effect on veteran homelessness once again in Lake County as less veterans needed emergency services than previous fiscal years.



Most importantly, less veterans are requiring to be placed in emergency shelter, which shows a positive trend. Moreover, the Commission believes that one of the main reasons for this decrease is the passage of the *Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022* (Pub. L. 117-168) (“PACT Act”), which has opened the opportunity for so many additional veterans to receive services and benefits that otherwise would have continued to have been ~~precluded from benefits~~ denied.

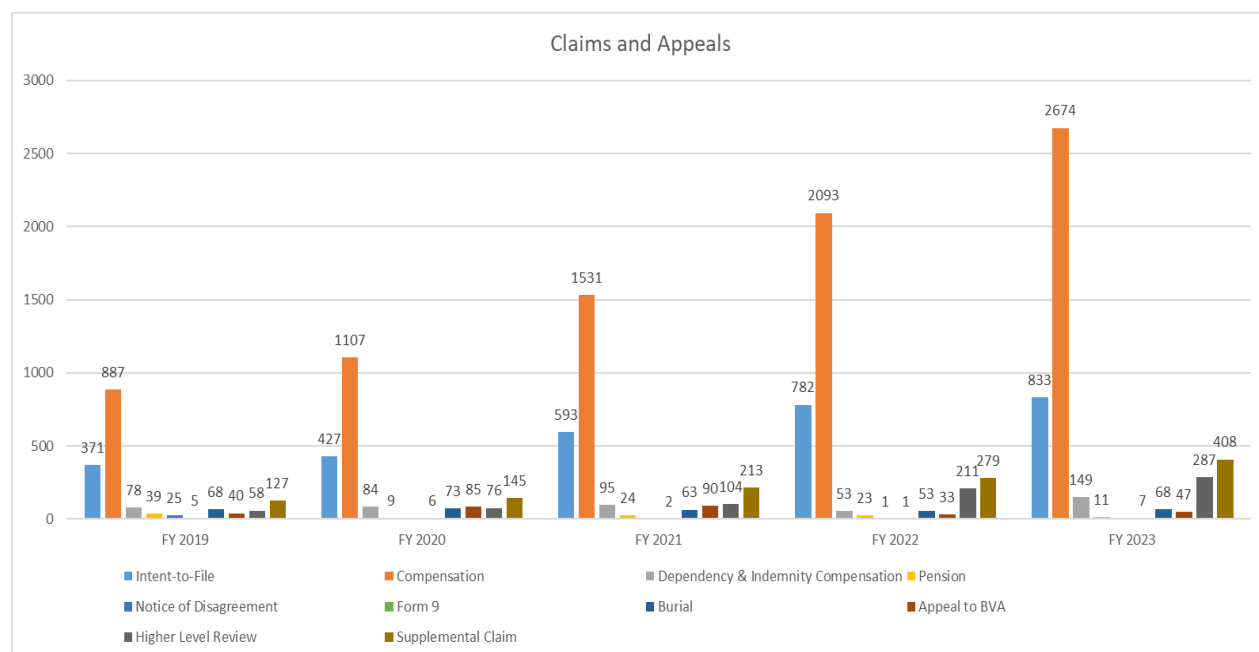


# Advocacy

## 1. Advocating at the Federal Agency Level

Advocating on behalf of Veterans involves assisting in the filing of claims for compensation, pension, school, and insurance, to local, state, and federal agencies that includes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Social Security Administration, adjudicating appeals for Veterans denied by representing those Veterans at the Board of Veterans Appeals, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

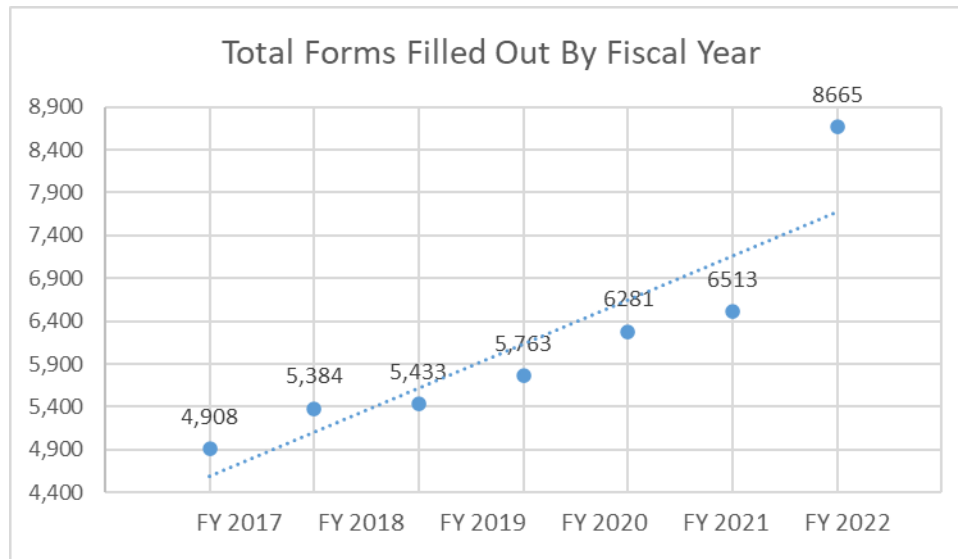
Fiscal year 2023 continued the trend seen over the preceding three fiscal years in drastic increases in request for advocacy assistance over previous fiscal years. Due to the staff’s incredible work throughout previous years, veterans from throughout the County of Lake have seen positive life changes through the assistance and needed services provided to them by the staff of the Commission.



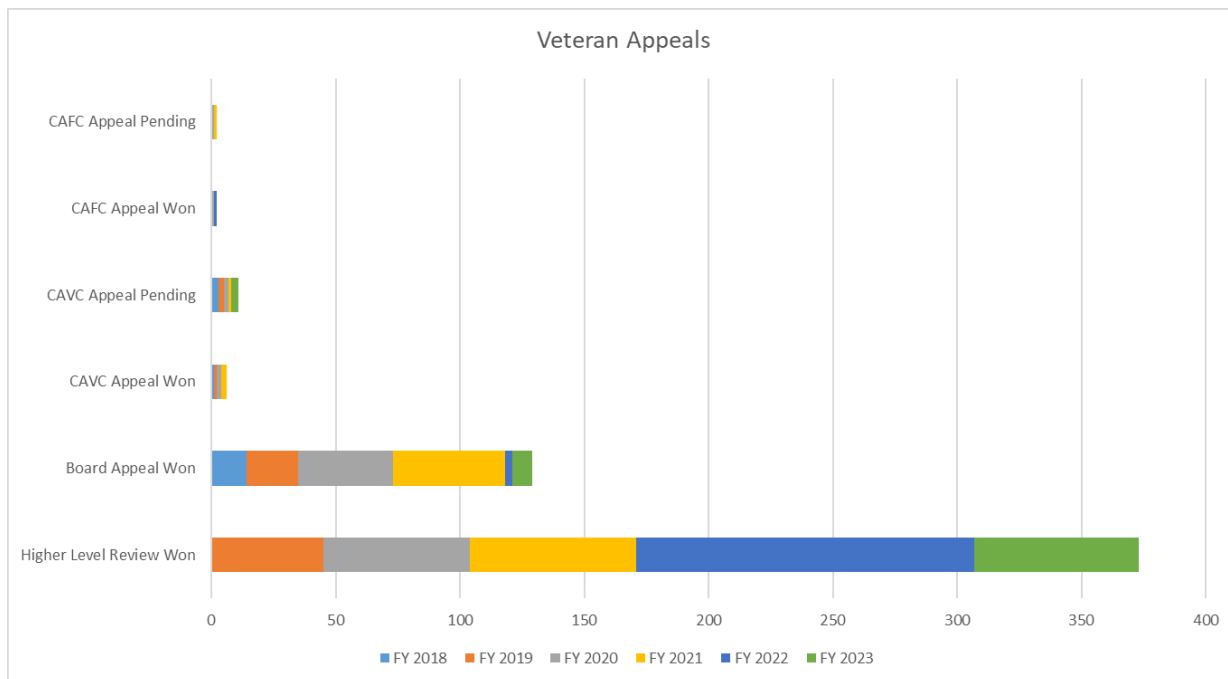
The advocacy work in front of the US Department of Veterans Affairs continued to show increases with the Commission increasing claim submissions more than double what was filed in fiscal year 2020. This represents the third fiscal year in a row to nearly double advocacy work done over previous years. Even with the drastic increase in claims, appeals, and other benefit applications filed, the Commission still saw an effective rate of 86 percent.

Year over year, the Commission continues to perform at an extremely high level of accuracy on every claim filed for the veterans of Lake County. Further, the continued exceptionally high level of accuracy on appeals filed for claims show the diligence, care, and commitment the staff of the Commission puts into each veteran and spouse. These positive trends further exemplify the fact that veterans' advocacy requires high levels of knowledge, education, and research acumen.

Total forms completed continues to exponentially increase year over year. This is due to the Commission filing more complete claims and appeal documentation with Regional Offices and the Board of Veterans Appeals in order to provide adjudicators with the data required to adjudicate claims effectively and correctly the first iteration, as well as briefs and supplemental filings to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Further, as a byproduct of the increased number of claims, appeals forms, and briefs in support of appeals filed, additional forms to support the claims and appeals increased. The number of forms completed is a solid production measure as claims or appeals filed may only be represented by one form, whereas evidence, supporting documentation, and additional forms (such as forms for dependency or release of information authorization) show a fuller picture of workload.



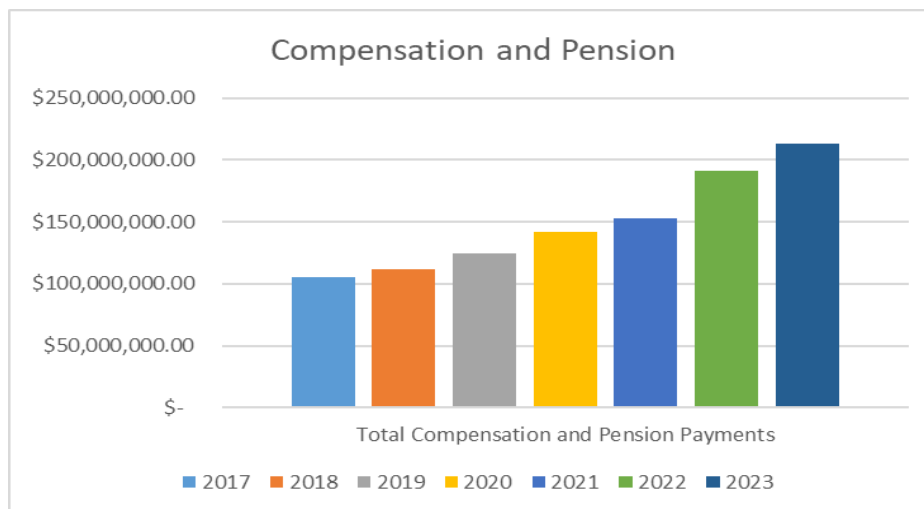
Further, the Commission staff continue to represent Veterans during all stages of appeals with numerous cases still pending before both the Board of Veterans Appeals and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. As the US Department of Veterans Affairs continue to work through



legacy appeals, these cases have taken priority over appeals falling under the Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act (Pub L. 115-55) (AMA). The Commission currently has an

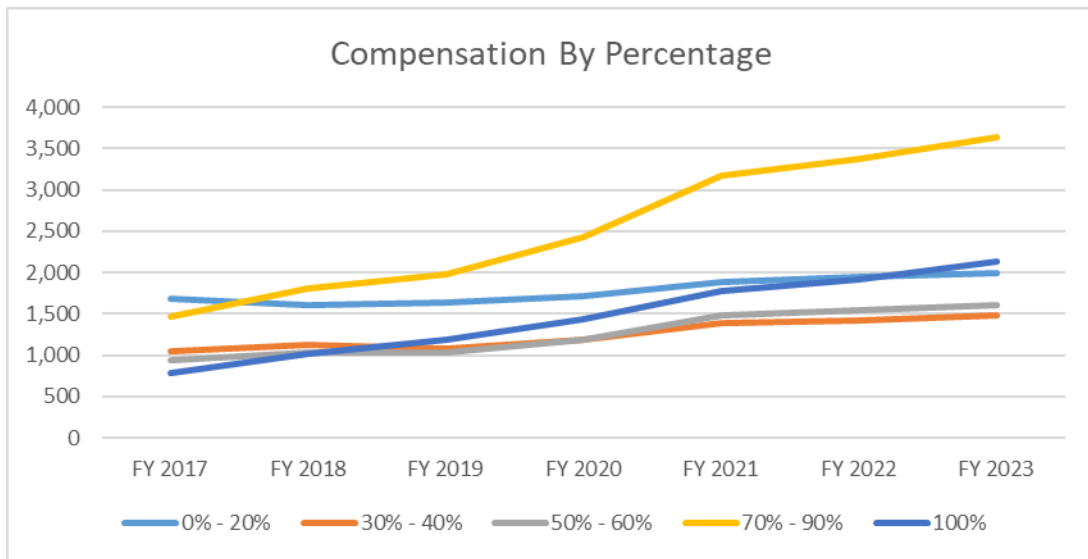
inventory of 100 pending AMA appeals at the Board of Veterans Appeals awaiting adjudication, while only having less than 10 legacy appeals still awaiting final adjudication.

Advocacy for VA benefits continues to be the primary focus of Commission staff. As indicated in the Introductory Letter, the Commission was instrumental in securing an estimated \$18,608,800.01 in new benefits paid by the Federal Government to Lake County Veterans, their dependents, and their survivors. Total VA Compensation and Pensions Payments, based on newly released data from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, for fiscal year 2023 for Lake County is expected to be approximately \$213,256,928.31.<sup>2</sup> This represents a return to the community of \$44.33 for every dollar of Property Tax Revenue received by the Commission. That amount does not consider money that we helped our Veterans save by assisting them in accessing VA health care, home loan, or education benefits. Consequently, the Commission continues to be a significant and judicious governmental entity at the county level.



<sup>2</sup> Further, when the economic theory of the Multiplier Effect is applied to this sum, with a conservative estimate of the Marginal Propensity to Consume of 80% and the Marginal Propensity to Save of 20%, these compensation and pension payments have a cumulative effect on the economy of Lake County of \$ 1,066,284,641.55. Veterans of Lake County are continuing to have an extremely positive impact on the economy of Lake County. In addition, these monies represent a positive funding source for the Lake County Government, which is different than the funding stream of Property Taxes, as this money is spent on gasoline, entertainment, and other taxable sources within Lake County that can be applied to other Lake County Government Services and needed projects, such as Road Improvement.

This is a remarkable increase in benefits paid to veterans in Lake County from fiscal year 2017, when benefits were approximately \$105,624,000. Across the compensation percentages, the Commission has worked tirelessly to maximize the benefits veterans should be receiving, whether through initial claims or through increases due to new conditions, appeals of wrongfully calculated benefits, and additional evidence discovered that was not available or reviewed at the time of the initial decision.



Lake County veterans and their families continue to receive consistent and effective advocacy services in claims work in front of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Not only are compensation for traditional benefits increasing, but also increases in veterans who are affected by PACT Act have seen a large increase in filings.

Further, fiscal year 2023 marked a massive increase in the veteran population of Lake County. Though this has caused our percentage of veterans receiving compensation to decrease from 30 percent as reported last year to 24 percent, Lake County increased its veteran population from roughly 32,000 veterans to nearly 45,000 veterans. Further, Lake County is the only County

in the State to have the majority of its veteran population under the age of 60, with approximately 57 percent of Lake County veterans age 59 and younger.

This marked increase in younger veterans points to positive trends for the services the Commission performs for our veterans and the Commission is actively working on new plans and programs to aid in these younger veterans in their reintegration to civilian life. We look forward to being able to share these new programs in future reports.

## **2. Advocating for Veterans With Federal Congressional Representatives and Staffers**

The Commission Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent traveled to Washington, DC in February of this year to discuss with members of Congress the Commitment to Veterans Services and Outreach Act (H.R. 984; S. 106), which will authorize federal funding for competitive grants to expand and support County Veteran Services Offices, like the Commission, to create, expand, or support CVSOs or similar government entities, such as state, municipal and tribal VSOs. The Commission will continue over the next fiscal year to advocate with members of Congress to get this important legislation passed to aid County level advocates for our veterans.

In October and November, the Superintendent traveled to Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress, in partnership with the National Association of Counties and multiple Veteran Service Organizations, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, and Disabled American Veterans to advocate for the passage of Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act (“GUARD VA Benefits Act”) (H.R. 1139; S. 740), which would reinstates criminal penalties for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA claims by companies and individuals who lack accreditation from the VA.

Currently, veterans in the State, as well as nationally, are being targeted by these unaccredited companies, known as “Claims Sharks”, who are actively targeting veterans through



telemarketing campaigns and online outreach initiatives to attract clients. There are many who are pushing to ensure these Claims Sharks are stopped. On August 8, forty-four Attorneys General signed an open letter to Congress urging the body to pass the proposal.

Spearheaded by the AGs of Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, and California, the letter was published by the authoritative National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG). The “non-partisan national forum” enumerates and denounces the activities which prompted the legislation and reconfirms the country’s commitment to honoring veterans – and protecting those “disproportionately targeted for financial victimization”. The Commission looks forward to advocating for this important legislation during the next fiscal year.

### **3. Advocating for State Legislation with Illinois Senators and Representatives**

The Commission continued its close working relationship with the Illinois Senators and Representatives from both parties whose districts encompass Lake County. Having these relationships has benefited not only the Veterans of Lake County and their families, but also the Veterans of the State.

This work included legislation being passed into law that increased oversight of Commissions throughout the State by codifying into law the Attorney General’s oversight and enforcement of the Military Veteran Assistance Act (PA 102-1132), creating a mechanism for the State to charter Veteran Service Organizations (PA 103-0405), and various other pieces of legislation still awaiting a final vote in the General Assembly.

### **4. Advocating for Partnerships and Support for Veterans Issues with Illinois Association of County Officials.**

The Commission continued to work closely with Illinois Association of County Officials (hereinafter “IACO”). Specifically, the Commission holds a key role as one of the many delegates from County Organizations on the IACO Legislative Committee. As the IACVAC delegate, the

Commission is able to advocate in front of the various County Organizations that make up IACO, to explain the necessity for certain legislation that has been filed in either Illinois Chamber. Having the ability to explain to these partner organizations the reasoning behind the need for changes, as well as have these partners join with IACVAC in our support or opposition to specific legislative items continues to be a positive impact on the Veterans Community in the State of Illinois.

## **Partnerships**

As covered above, the Commission has continued its partnerships with both US Senate and Congressional offices and State Legislators in Lake County to ensure the best possible legislation is moved forward for Illinois Veterans. The Commission looks forward to continuing this tradition of partnerships with those newly elected.

The Commission has partnered on several different initiatives and opportunities with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and looks forward to the great relationship with the staff and leadership of IDVA.

The Commission continued its partnership with the Allen J. Lynch Medal of Honor Veteran's Assistance Foundation in order to further provide assistance to those Veterans in critical need.

The Commission partnered with the National Association of Counties on important pieces of legislation on the Federal level and looks forward to future years of working together on Federal level initiatives.

The Commission continued its partnership with Veterans Path to Hope who provide needed transitional living, peer support, housing support, and employment assistance to Veterans throughout the Lake and McHenry County region.

The Commission continued its partnership with the Midwest Veterans Closet, continuing the much-needed service of providing clothing and food to Veterans and their families.

The Commission has continued a strong partnership with Prairie State Legal Services.

The Commission continued to partner with the Lake County Sheriff's Office, PADS Lake County, The Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC), the Midwest Veterans Closet, Medal of Honor Recipient Allen J. Lynch, the Lake County States Attorney's Office, and Lake County Veterans and Family Services through the "Veteran Ambassador Program" and will continue to work with these organizations to return to Functional Zero and ensure no Veteran is left behind.

As a member of the Illinois Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (Department of Defense sponsored organization) the Commission assists Lake County Reservists and Guardsmen with re-employment problems and recognition of private companies and employers who go above and beyond in supporting Lake County Reservists and Guardsmen who have been activated.

Partnership with the Illinois Department of Employment Security has been essential over the past year and the Commission looks forward to the continued and important work of assisting veterans finding gainful employment.

## Outlook For 2024

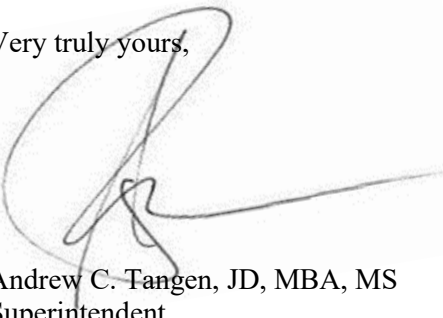
Fiscal Year 2023 continued the trends that began during the Pandemic on increased need for services within the veteran community. These trendlines show there is much work to still be accomplished for our veterans.

Throughout fiscal year 2023, the Commission saw a massive increase in claims assistance need due to the implementation of the PACT Act. This legislation, the largest toxic exposure legislation ever signed into law in US history, will continue to be the number one driver of assistance, as it opened up new avenues for Federal benefits for veterans who had been precluded from receiving benefits in the past. The Commission expects that this increase will not slow down throughout fiscal year 2024.

The Commission has created several initiatives that will not only continue to provide prompt, effective, and accurate advocacy for the Veterans of Lake County who gave their all to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, but also provide a path forward for a veteran community that can be an example to the citizens of this great State.

The Commission further looks forward to continuing the growing relationship with the Lake County Government and County Board to find the best possible solution for the veterans and the taxpayers of Lake County, to provide the maximum services to those men and women who have given their youth, their health, their bodies, and their minds for the citizens of this great State.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew C. Tangen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew C. Tangen, JD, MBA, MS  
Superintendent

CC: Veteran Service Organizations of Lake County  
VAC Lake County  
Federal Legislators  
State Legislators  
Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs  
Lake County Board

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