



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY
VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSIONS

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Message from the President

Dear Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to share the progress and resilience demonstrated by our Commissions in an evolving and challenging legislative landscape. Despite global uncertainties and major fluctuations, we remained focused on our strategic goals, delivering solid financial performance and operational excellence.

Throughout the year, we prioritized continuing education, legislative advocacy, and veteran satisfaction. We launched new initiatives that have not only expanded our market reach but also strengthened our core business practices. Our Commissions worked tirelessly to adapt to shifting veteran demands and to ensure that our services remained relevant, responsive, and value-driven.

Financially, we have achieved steady growth in revenue, managed costs effectively, and maintained a strong balance sheet. These outcomes reflect our disciplined approach and our commitment to long-term sustainability and stakeholder value.

Looking ahead, we are optimistic and confident in our roadmap. Our focus for the coming year will be on digital transformation, sustainable practices, and creating greater value for our stakeholders. We will continue to invest in talent, technology, and partnerships that align with our vision for the future.

On behalf of the leadership team, I extend my sincere gratitude to our Commission members, partners, and sponsors for their unwavering support and trust. Together, we look forward to another year of progress and shared success.

Warm regards,
Andrew Tangen
President
IACVAC



Illinois Association of County Veterans
Assistance Commissions

MEET OUR BOARD



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OUR MISSION



The Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions is organized and operated for the educational purposes of the Association's Veteran membership, which, in part, consists of Veteran Service Officers throughout the State of Illinois. This mission conforms to the terms established in the 501 (c)(3) section of the Internal Revenue code.

- To serve as the central counseling and coordinating office for all County Veterans Assistance Commission offices included as members of the Illinois Association of County Veterans Service Officers to be referred to as Association.
- To foster and perpetuate VAC's in all counties where viable commissions do not exist and provide such information and training as deemed necessary.
- To have general oversight of the rules, laws, and regulations pertinent to governing and administering the County VAC's within the State of Illinois for the benefit of Military Veterans and their dependents.
- To establish communication and recognition with all local, state, and federal service officers for processing Veterans and their dependents' claims as may be referred to the Commission office.
- To promote the welfare of all Military Veterans and their dependents

IMPACT REPORT

Introduction

Of the 54 county Veterans Assistance Commissions operating under the Illinois Association, 38 submitted end-of-year data. The following metrics outline our key performance indicators for Fiscal Year 2025.



Key Impact Metrics

Total Veterans Assisted:	Total Funds Obtained FY 25:	Accredited County Service Officers:	Witness Slips Signed:
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120,961+

\$178,297,558+

168+

369

Operational Impact by Goals

New Benefit Payouts Per FY

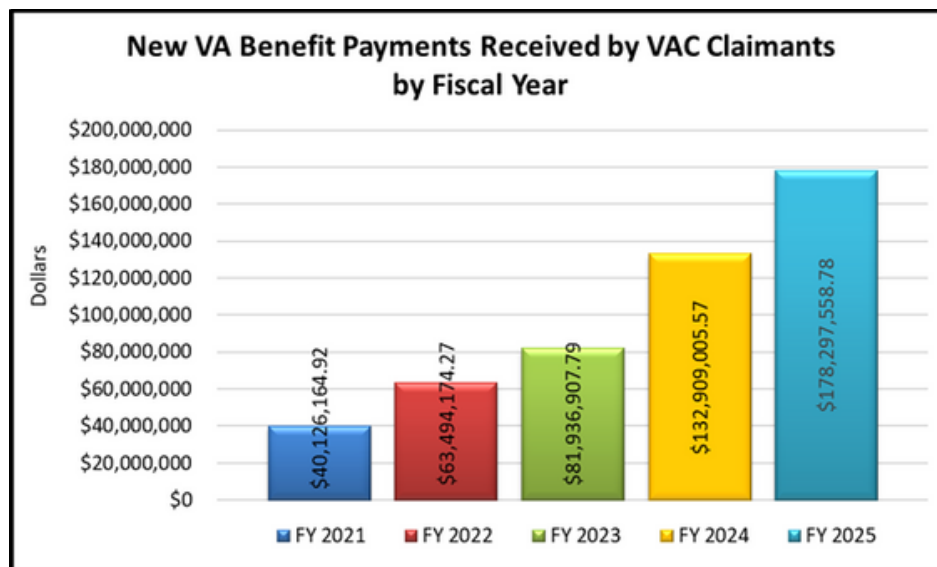
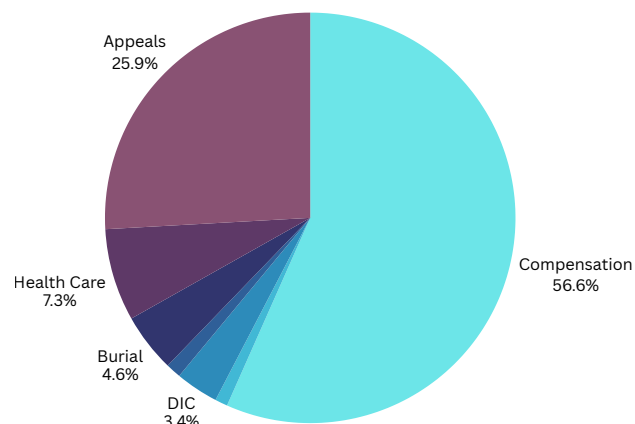


Figure 1. This chart shows the total amount of federal VA service-connected disability or non-service connected pension benefits received by VAC clients by fiscal year. The large jump this year can largely be attributed to increased benefits available from the PACT Act and the realization of the claims assistance mandate on VAC's from recent amendments to the Illinois Military Veterans Assistance Act (MVAA).

\$178,297,558 in NEW Benefits – FY 2025

Annual Claims Reports

Here you will find our Association's cumulative impact on veterans' benefits throughout the State of Illinois. As a disclaimer, these statistics are not a perfect year-over-year comparison. This report is compiled on a volunteer basis and not all VAC's contribute their data. This year, we had some new VAC's contribute their data and we had some VAC's that contributed their data last year, but not contribute it this year. This year, we had 38 VAC's contribute to this report, two more than last year. Therefore, these figures should be read as "at least" in their totality as obviously the non-contributing VAC's did provide assistance that is not reported here. We look forward to more complete data in future years. With that disclaimer, these statistics are impressive and show that VAC's have an incredible impact and remain an essential unit of local government.

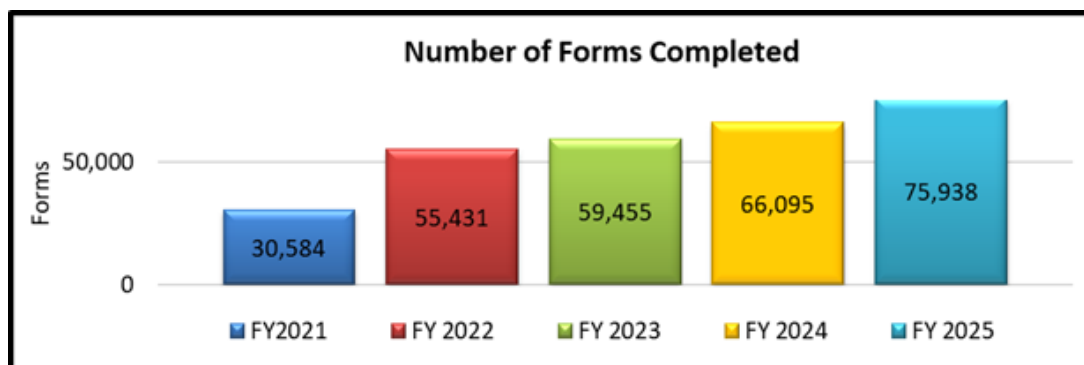


Fiscal Year 2025 Total Claims:

Compensation: 14,487
 Pension: 253
 DIC: 866
 Survivors Pension: 307
 Burial: 1,182
 Health Care: 1,861
 Appeals: 6,619

The VAC's statewide in FY 2025 were able to complete over 4,500 more compensation claims than in FY 2024. With that, both Veterans pension and survivors pension claims dropped- which is never a bad thing. The VAC's did see an increase in Appeals claims - up from 4,997 in FY24 to 6,619 in FY25.

The VAC offices assist Veterans and their families with filing all kinds of claims. In doing so, they have multiple forms to file- whether it be per claim type, in response to VA letters and adding additional information to claims or appealing unjust decisions. Below is a chart for the past 5 years on the amount of forms that VAC's completed per Fiscal Year. As you can see there is a increase per year - with the difference between FY24 and FY25 being over 9,800 forms.



Clients Assisted / Financial Assistance

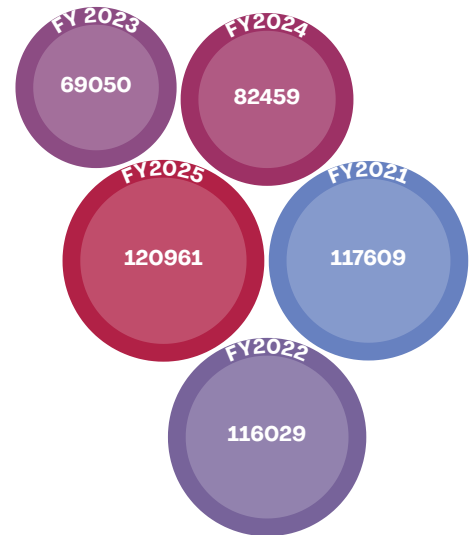
Figure Shown. (number in center of circle)

The number of clients assisted by VAC's across Illinois has increased since the previous year. This figure has fluctuated over the last five years which we attribute largely due to standardized data reporting and data integrity issues. The more recent the number, the more accurate the data as most VAC's are adopting a similar definition on "clients assisted." - Shown in white (center of circle)

Figure Shown. (size of circle-numbers below)

A critical service provided by VAC's is providing financial assistance to indigent veterans and their families. There is a marginal increase in financial assistance payments over the previous fiscal year.

There was a increase in assistance payouts from FY 24 - FY 25 of over \$580,000. Not every client that we assist is in need of financial assistance, but we are grateful that we can be somewhere for our Veterans and families to turn in their time of need.

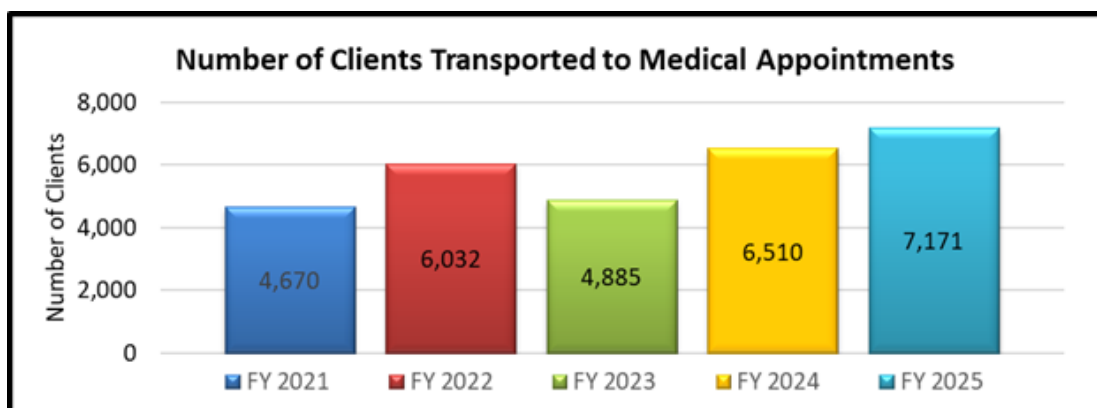


FY Financial Assistance Data:

FY 2021: \$927,936.24
 FY 2022: \$1,725,703.17
 FY 2023: \$1,828,049.13
 FY 2024: \$2,217,391.99
 FY 2025: \$2,798,495.56

Transportation

Another crucial service that some VAC's provide, is transportation to and from medical appointments - mostly at VA medical facilities. It is often utilized by Veterans who have medical conditions that prohibit their ability to drive or drive long distance. Not all VAC's offer their own transport services, some utilize pre-existing transit or other services in their area to assist Veterans. Below is a graph of how many Veterans used VAC transit to Medical appointments per Fiscal Year.



Educational Impact

FY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
IL CVSO's trained	67	69	70	81	92
out of state	0	1	0	0	1

Figure shows Number of County Veteran Service Officers trained by the Association per fiscal year.

Winter Meeting

IACVAC began the year with a full-day Winter training session designed to strengthen the capabilities of Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents. The agenda focused on practical issues essential to operating and growing Veterans Assistance offices. Attendance and engagement were strong, reflecting the ongoing need for high-quality, accessible training for county leadership.

Annual Conference – September 2025

The 2025 Annual Conference was held in September and welcomed 92 Illinois CVSO's along with one CVSO from out of state, demonstrating the reach and reputation of IACVAC's educational programming. Participants benefited from presentations delivered by a diverse group of knowledgeable and experienced speakers. Across the conference, CVSO's earned more than 20 Continuing Education Units, supporting their ongoing accreditation and ensuring they remain current on best practices, policy updates, and veteran-focused service delivery.

During the fall board meeting, the Education Committee extended an open invitation to CVSO's interested in contributing to IACVAC's educational mission. The committee encouraged members to participate as trainers, presenters, and volunteers to help expand and enhance the training opportunities offered throughout the year. This outreach aims to build a stronger, more collaborative network of educators within the association and ensure that IACVAC's training programs continue to evolve with the needs of our counties and the veterans we serve. The Education Committee remains committed to delivering high-quality, relevant, and accessible training to all CVSO's and VAC leadership across Illinois. We appreciate the participation and support of our members throughout 2025 and look forward to expanding our educational offerings in the coming year.



Legislation

Advocacy: Throughout the year, members of IACVAC met with members of Congress and their staffs to discuss the implementation of the CVSO Act, crackdown on overdevelopment and unnecessary development of claims, improvement to implementation of toxic exposure risk activities, increasing and improving Dependency Indemnity Compensation for surviving spouses and dependents, restoration of criminal penalties to unaccredited claims consultants, reducing barriers to enrollment in health care, improvement of reproductive health care access for women veterans, expanding dental care, and modernizing the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, which provides health benefits to eligible family members and survivors of veterans.

Legislation: The Association continued its close working relationship with the Illinois Senators and Representatives from both parties. Having these relationships has benefited the Veterans of the State. This work included legislation being passed into law provide more accurate calculations under the Illinois Service Member Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, HB 1362, Public Act 104-0176. The Association further worked with the General Assembly on HB 1421 (Veterans Paid Leave Act), SB 0186 (Temporary Military Licensure Act), SB 1368/HB 1352 (Multi-County Veterans Assistance Commissions Act), and SB 1174/HB 1280 (Uniform Deployed Parents Custody and Visitation Act). The Association looks forward to the next legislative year to get these important pieces of legislation through the process and enacted into law.

Number of Witness Slips Signed Per FY:

FY 2021: 48
FY 2022: 217
FY 2023: 300
FY 2024: 1,446
FY 2025: 369



Illinois Veteran Statistics

<u>2025 Population Statistics</u>	<u>Illinois</u>	<u>United States</u>
Veteran Population Rate (2024) [2] [8]:	4.8%	5.3%
Veterans Over Age 65 [2]:	38.9%	45%
Female Veteran Rate [2]:	12.5%	12%
Veteran Median Income (2024) [8]:	\$54,621	\$52,122
Civilian Median Income (2024) [8]:	\$44,683	\$41,734

Figure 1. Income and population statistics for 2025 unless otherwise noted.

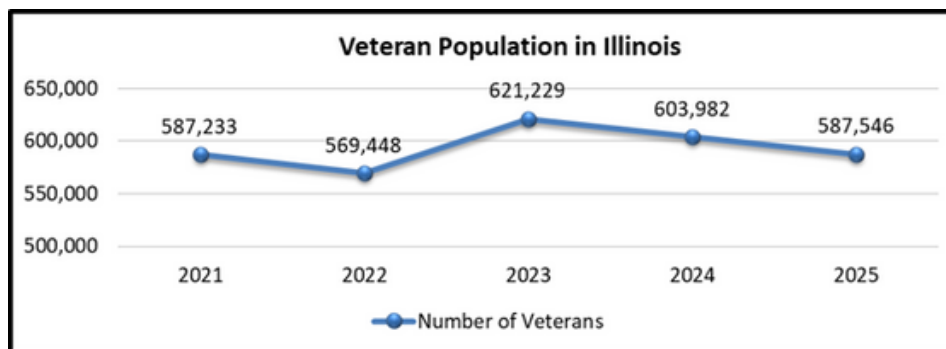


Figure 2. The veteran population in the U.S. is projected to decline 36% by 2053.

Figures such as VA total expenditures by category/fiscal year, homeless veteran population in Illinois, unemployment rates in Illinois vs Nationally, Number of Veterans receiving specific disability compensation ratings, gender distribution of VA Service-Connected compensation, gender distribution of VA non-service connected pension, Veterans population total receiving property tax exemptions (and a breakdown of each), percentage of eligible Veterans utilizing the homestead exemption, percentage of veterans utilizing VA healthcare and education benefits are all tracked by the Illinois Association of County Veterans Assistance Commissions. However, at the time of this report, no new data was available. In some instances, no new data has been available since 2023. We continue to monitor these numbers and will update when new data becomes available.



Current Counties

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Counties Continued

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Whiteside County 1300 West 2nd Street Rock Falls, IL 61071 Phone: (815) 626-8640 Fax: None stryderwood@yahoo.com	Will County 2400 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 110 Joliet, IL 60435 Phone: (815) 740-8389 Fax: (815) 740-4329 vacwc@willcounty.gov
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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 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: A tax-free needs-based monetary benefit paid to wartime veterans, who meet certain age or non-service connected disability requirements.

Pension: See “Non-Service Connected Pension”

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: Supervisor who has the executive powers of the Veterans Assistance Commission.

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 accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and trained to assist veterans and their dependents in filing claims for benefits with the VA.

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



Contact Us



www.veteransbenefitsillinois.org

References

[1] National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, "Veterans Population Model," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington D.C., 2023.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington D.C., 2024.

