



VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF COOK COUNTY

2027 Budget Summery

VACCC FY27 Budget Proposal — Highlights

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The Ask

The VACCC requests an FY27 operating budget of \$5,664,819, up \$2,464,819 (+77%) from the FY26 adopted budget of \$3.2 million. Of that increase, \$1.0 million goes to doubling the Special Cooperative Programs (direct-assistance) line from \$1.0M to \$2.0M; the rest funds hiring into vacant/new positions, expanded contractual and professional services, and standing up the new Rolling Meadows office.

Budget breakdown (proposed request):

Category	Amount
Personnel Services	\$3,138,425
Contractual Services	\$2,496,393
Office Supplies	\$30,000
Total	\$5,664,818

Staffing Expansion

Current staff: 20 FTE (authorized FY26). Proposal grows to 35 FTE by adding 15 positions, most notably:

A new Bureau Chief, Veteran Services (\$127,218) — dedicated executive oversight of the VSO program
8 additional Veteran Service Officers (bringing VSOs from 6 to 14), plus 2 Veteran Services Managers to run North/South regional teams

A new Chief of Staff (\$127,218) and 2 additional Administrative Assistant IVs and a second Communications & Outreach Coordinator

Proposed leadership salaries: Superintendent \$136,334; Deputy Superintendent \$118,724; CFO \$146,063; Manager, Finance & Business Operations \$114,881.

Why: The VSO Case

This is the centerpiece rationale. In just the first half of FY26 — with often only one fully accredited VSO on staff — the program:

Represented 1,224 Veterans, completed 2,292 claim actions

Generated \$12.44 million in recurring annual VA compensation and ~\$948,000 in retroactive benefits

At full FY27 staffing (17-person Veteran Services Bureau covering all 17 County Commissioner districts), VACCC projects capacity to serve 13,000+ Veterans/year, complete ~24,808 claim actions, and generate ~\$127.96 million in recurring annual VA compensation — federally funded money flowing into Cook County at no added cost to local taxpayers.

Other Major Investments

New Rolling Meadows office (northwest suburbs) plus early groundwork for a “southland” (south suburban) location — aimed at reducing geographic/transportation barriers

Special Emphasis Coordinators for MST survivors, elderly, homeless/justice-involved, minority, women, and LGBTQ+ Veterans

Continued vehicle fleet, digitization (Iron Mountain), and training/accreditation investments (NACVSO, IACVAC memberships and conferences)

Context

Cook County has an estimated 132,000+ Veterans (~1/5 of Illinois’ Veteran population). The proposal frames VACCC’s growth trajectory — from a 3-person operation roughly two years ago to a 20-person, now proposed 35-person, countywide service agency — as a high-return public investment: local dollars spent on staff translate into many multiples in federal benefits flowing to Cook County veteran households.