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## Trumbull County Veterans Service Commission

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## Veterans Service Office | Trumbull County, Ohio End of Year Brief, CY 2021



January 2022





### **Our Pledge**

When you come into the Trumbull County Veterans Service Office one of our knowledgeable associates will assist you. The people that work in the Trumbull County Veterans Service Office have a compassionate understanding of the problems, which confront veterans, widows, widowers, and their families.

At the Trumbull County Veterans Service Office, we are deeply concerned with the assistance, care and support that our Veterans receive. We understand that alleviating the suffering that accompanies an accident, illness or death is important. In most cases we are able to offer veterans, their surviving spouse, and/or dependent children the assistance they need and deserve. It is our duty to ensure our Veterans have the very best service possible. This is at the heart of our mission here at the Trumbull County Veterans Service Office.

Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have a problem.

Director & Staff  
Trumbull County Veterans Service Office

### **Our Mission**

The Trumbull County Veterans Service Office has a mission to provide temporary aid and assistance to veterans, dependents and survivors in time of need and provide assistance when submitting claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The Trumbull County Veterans Service Office is a state mandated agency dedicated to aiding Trumbull County Veterans during times of need.

### **Our History**

The Veterans Service Assistance program was started over one hundred years ago (1886) to assist the Union Soldiers and their families in times of need. Each of the 88 counties in Ohio has a board of five appointed Veterans Service Commissioners who administer the program for their respective county.

Our purpose is not to sustain and subsidize an unsatisfactory lifestyle. Rather it is to provide temporary immediate assistance to those who will make a conscientious effort to find a permanent solution to their current financial dilemma.

Trumbull County  
Veterans Service Commission

## **Our Services**

**The Trumbull County Veterans Service Office provides two basic services:**

1. Temporary immediate financial aid and assistance to eligible veterans and family members who have demonstrated a need as set forth by the Commission.
2. Assist veterans, family members and survivors when applying to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for benefits.

**Our assistance includes but is not limited to:**

- Financial Assistance
  - Rent and mortgage payments.
  - Utilities: Gas, Electric and Water
  - Food and personal hygiene items
  - Certain Medical
  - Dental Program in partnership with the St. Elizabeth's Hospital
- Transportation to and from VA Medical Center in Cleveland (Louis Stokes VAMC),
- Grave markers and flags
- Free Notary for Veterans & Families
- Veterans Identification Cards (unofficial) through the Trumbull County Records Office

**Service Assistance:**

- Proper submission of claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Representation at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) via virtual hearings
- Preparations of forms and paperwork
- Documentation of claims and pertinent data
- Submission for records, awards decorations and medals
- DD 214 certification
- Meeting space for veterans organizations

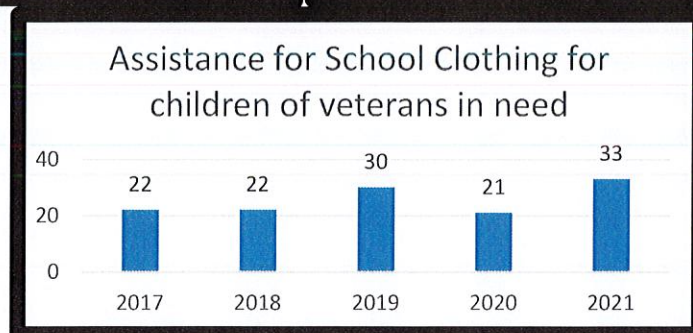
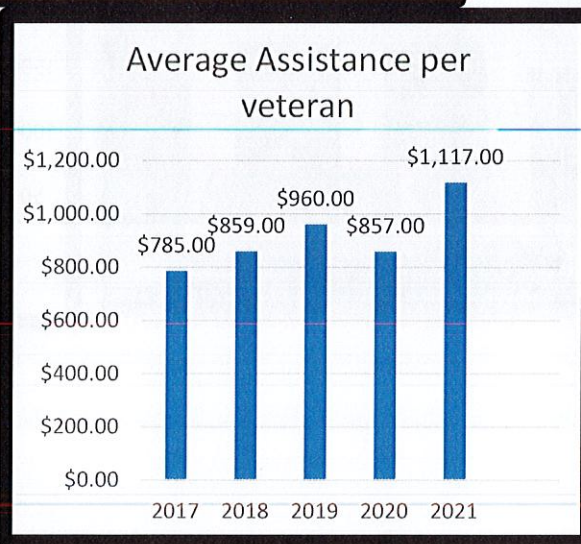
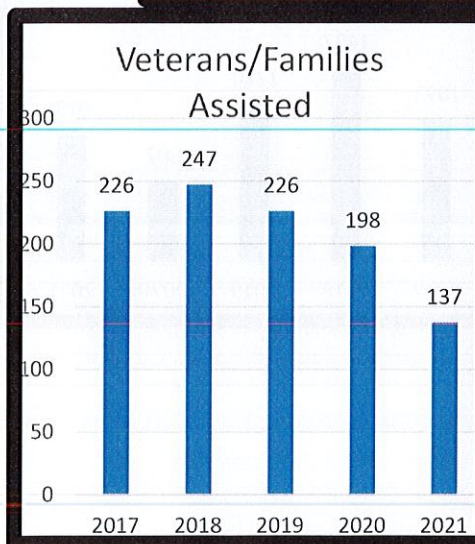
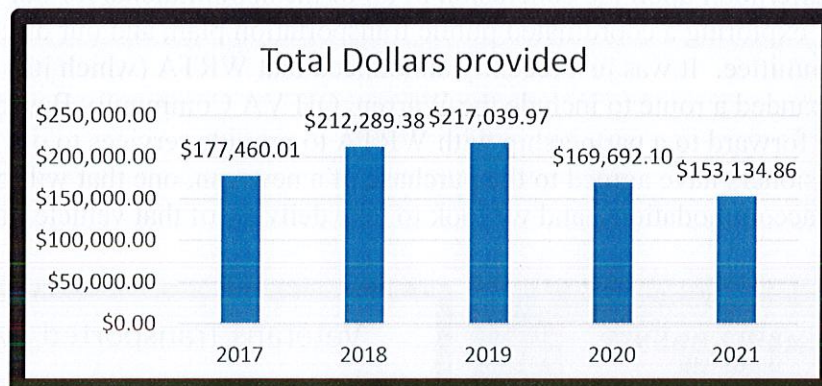
**Our services are FREE of charge!**



# *Programs and Partnerships*

## *1. Assistance Program*

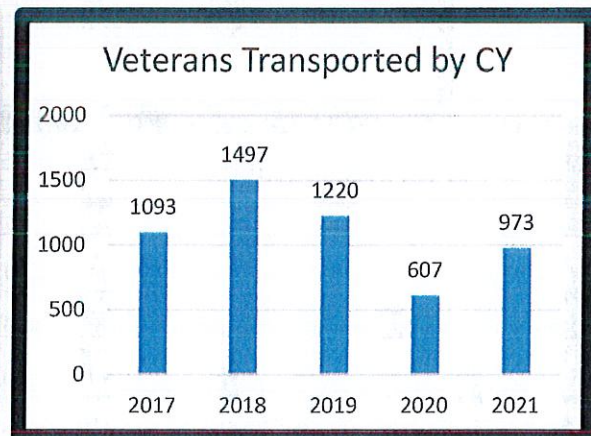
The Trumbull County Veterans Service Office provided relief for 137 Trumbull County Veterans and their families in CY2021. The reorganization in 2014 shifted these cases to the certified service officers, who are qualified to determine the veteran or family members eligibility to federal benefits, thereby assisting them to find long term solution to their financial setback. This program will provide a veteran that is faced with a recent loss of income or other substantiated financial shortfall, with a subsidy for housing, food, utilities, and transportation. The office coordinates with other agencies to fill the gaps for the needs of veterans. One unique assistance program is the School clothes program, our office provides the veteran in financial need with an annual subsidy to purchase school clothes for their dependent children. The recent decline in usage of the program, is multifactorial related to an increase in veterans of Trumbull County receiving federal benefits, as well as the Pandemic has provided a number of other financial resources.





## *2. Transportation Program*

In 1988 our office began providing transportation to the VA Medical Centers in Cleveland, this was just before the State of Ohio required County Veteran Service Offices to provide this service. VA Hospitals that are not within a reasonable distance from the home of a veteran, present a challenge to that veteran getting the care that they require. Veterans that have a medical appointment that are confined to a wheelchair, the VA provides door to door service for them, which is coordinated through VA Social Services. Our van departs our office each day at 7 am and returns in the afternoon upon the conclusion of all of the appointments for our scheduled riders. Trumbull County has been exploring a coordinated public transportation plan, and our director was asked to be a part of their advisory committee. It was just recently announced that WRTA (which just recently expanded into Trumbull County) expanded a route to include the Warren, OH VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic on TOD Ave. We are looking forward to a partnership with WRTA to provide services to our veterans. The Trumbull County Commissioners have agreed to the purchase of a new van, one that will provide enough space to be fitted for wheelchair accommodations, and we look to take delivery of that vehicle in 2022.





### 3. Local Partners



County veteran offices in Ohio, were created with an implied responsibility of cooperating with other organizations and agencies in the area to accomplish the mission of assisting those that have served. Ohio statute calls for a County Judge to appoint members of veteran organizations to the Veteran Service Commission, thus giving the board a broad approach to recognizing the service of veterans throughout the county. Trumbull County is home to 31 veteran organizations (VFW 13 Posts, American Legion 11 Posts, AMVETS 2 Posts, DAV 1 Chapter, MOPH 1 Chapter, VVA 1 Chapter, and Army Navy 2 Garrisons) there are quite a few other veteran organization affiliates throughout the county as well. These organizations are our primary partner for the distribution of Memorial Day Flags, each year through their efforts over 30,000 flags are placed on the graves of veterans in Trumbull County. The organizations also can make a request for reimbursement of funds for their efforts to recognize Memorial Day. Our office is also involved greatly with the organization of veteran related events and speaking engagements including Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

**YARS – FCS-** Other local partners the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, our office has regular communication with the Family Readiness Office on base, their office is responsible for the welfare of the Airmen that serve on the base, and many times we have partnered with them to assist serving reservists with financial needs when the situation dictates. Family and Community Services is another major partner in that they are the recipients of Federal Grants in partnership with VA and HUD. FCS supervises 2 programs in Trumbull County, Vet Haven and SSVF. Vet Haven is transition in place housing for qualified homeless veterans, and Supportive Services for Veterans and Families is for those that are in danger of becoming homeless, both programs have done amazing work within the county to meet the needs of veterans that disadvantaged.

**Legal-** Veterans Assistance Program is managed by Trumbull County Probate Court Judge James Fredericka. This program created five years ago, is a partnership with municipal judges throughout the county to assist veterans with legal issues. The Program provides case management and supervision to assist the veterans through the program, to date the program has graduated dozens, and helped them return to a positive path.

**National Partners** Our office has 6 certified and accredited representatives that annually attend training at state and national levels. The training of these individuals is to assure that veterans in Trumbull County are meeting with staff that qualified to make sure they get the benefit they are supposed to receive. Our director just completed his term as the President of the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers, which has helped to increase the visibility of our office throughout the country.

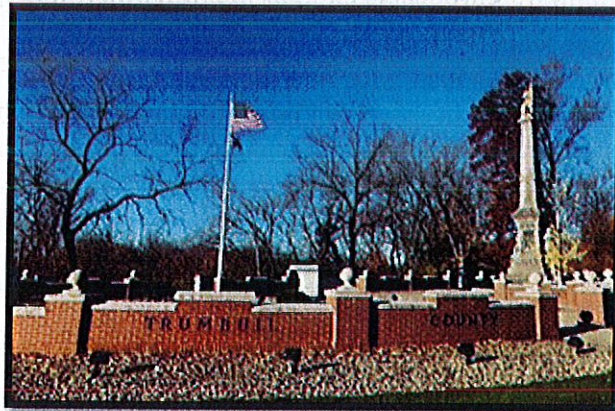


**Dental-**Free dental services were made available in 2021 to veterans through a partnership with St. Elizabeths Hospital and the Kikel Dental Clinic. The van comes to the office once per month to do everything from cleanings to extractions.



**Counseling-** Prior to COVID 19 our office provided space for the Cleveland Vet Center to meet with veteran clients that needed social services. Twice per month a Social Worker from the Vet Center would meet face to face with veterans of Trumbull County in our office. These appointments are now taking place through telehealth.

**Memorial-** In 2007 the Western Reserve Veterans Memorial Association spearheaded the efforts to build a beautiful a County Veterans Memorial on Mahoning Ave. adjacent to Courthouse Square. We have been seeking solutions to allow for our office to provide for the future oversight and upkeep of the memorial, we are hopeful that 2022 will bring about a resolution.

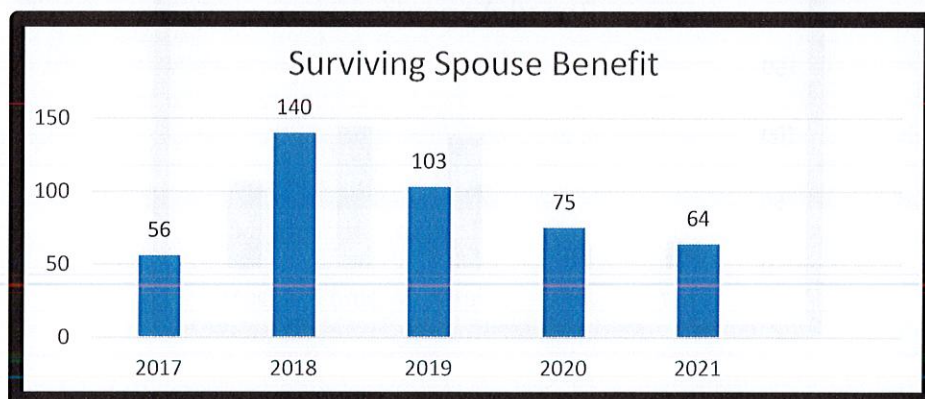
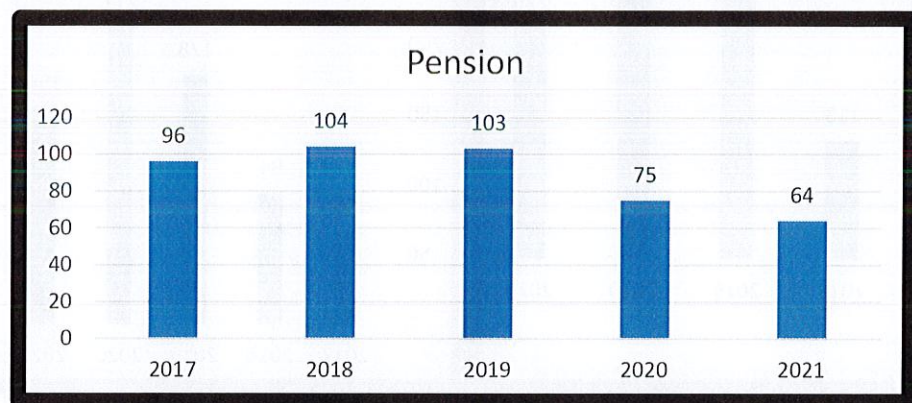
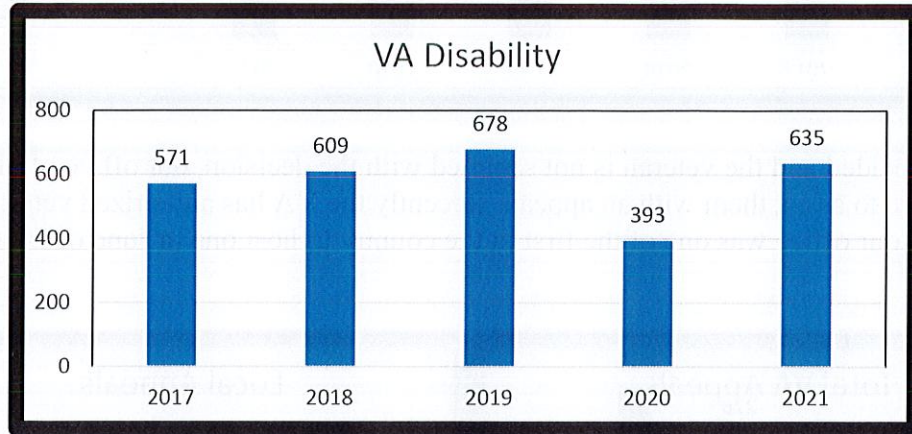


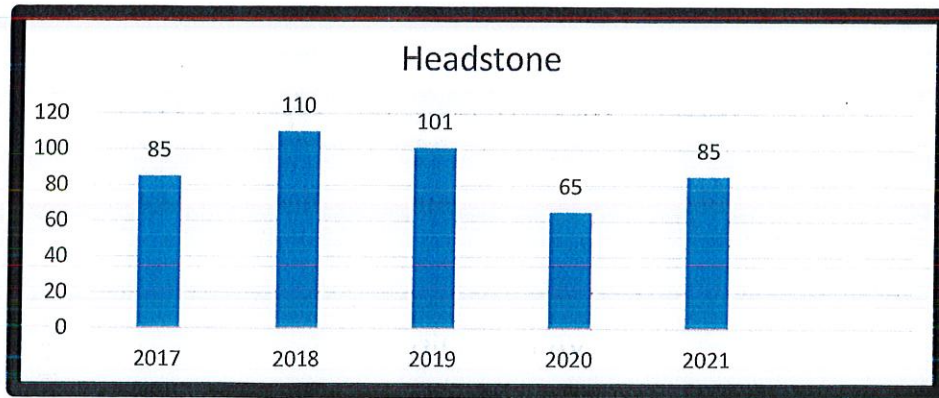
**Health Care/Nursing Care-** The Department of Veterans Affairs has a Community Based Outpatient Clinic on TOD Ave. This facility has over 5000 unique patients, and provides primary care, podiatry, and mental health services. The CBOC in Youngstown provides additional services and veterans using public transportation can connect to both on WRTA. The VA also contracts with Washington Square Nursing Home in order to provide skilled care at no cost to qualified\* veterans.



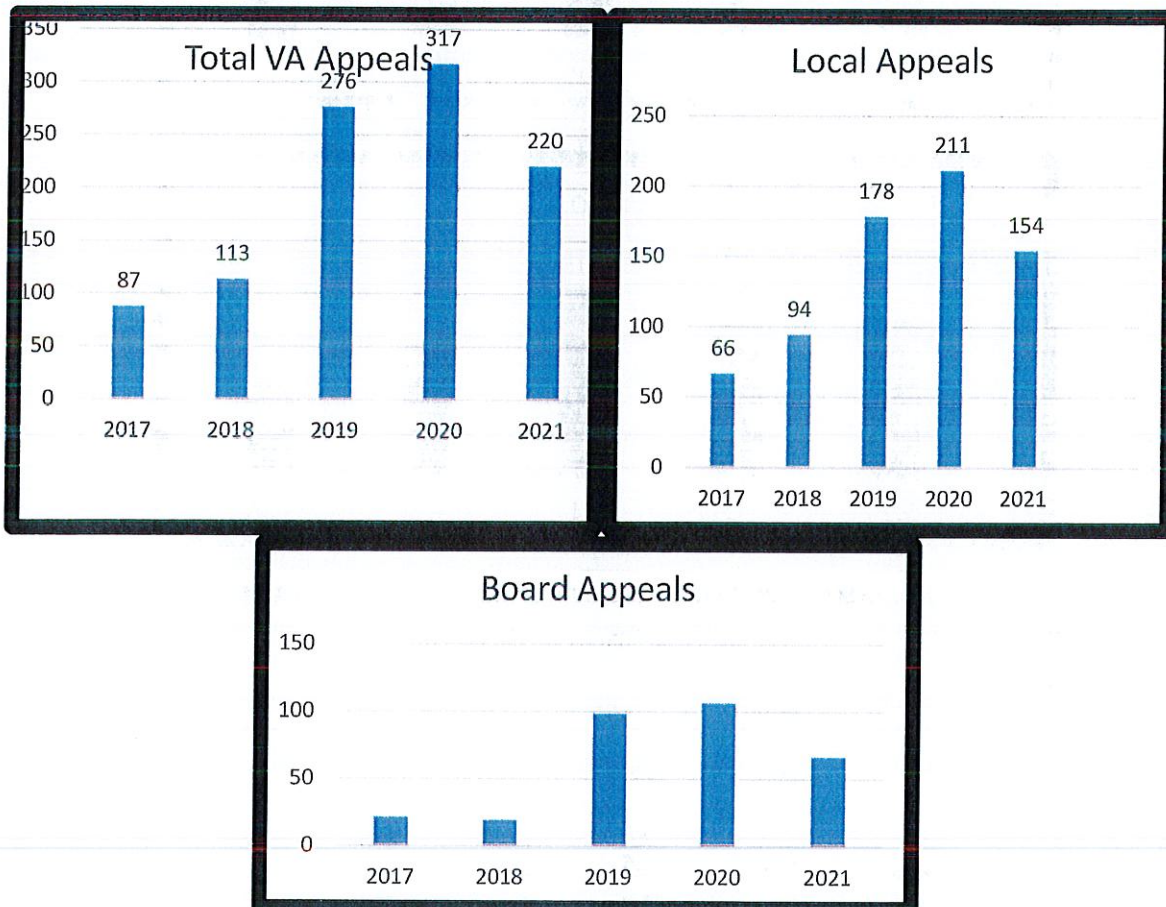
## **VA Claims provided by the office**

The training of our staff is the only way to assure that our veterans are getting the correct assistance with their applications to the VA. The service officers take great pride in being able to help veterans and their family members through this sometimes painful process.





When VA claims are decided and the veteran is not satisfied with the decision, our office of highly trained service officers are there to assist them with an appeal. Recently the VA has authorized veterans to attend VA hearings remotely, and our office was one of the first in the country to host one in June of 2020.



***What veterans should expect from their local advocates-*** The numbers of claims filed translate in to more and more veterans of Trumbull County receiving more in Federal Benefits than they have in years passed. Our office conducts on average 30 client contacts per day, these client contacts range from a request to obtain a discharge to applying for widows benefits. Our office is here to assist the veteran from the time they come home from the military, until their passing, we are there to apply for their education benefits to send them to



college when they get home, to help them with the paperwork for their VA Home loan to purchase their first home, to adding dependency information when they marry or have children, and to assist their family when they pass.

**Return on investment** – Each year the state of Ohio takes our budgetary information, veteran population and the Department of Veterans Affairs expenditures for our county and they compute a ratio of local dollars spent vs. federal dollars returned, which helps us to understand and stay committed to making sure our staff are properly trained and demand that the Veterans of Trumbull County get exactly what they’re supposed to.

## EXPENDITURES FOR VETERANS

### FEDERAL VS. COUNTY 2011-2020

Federal VA Dollars Spent Within County								
Prime Impact Areas							County Veterans Budget Information	
Fiscal Year	County Veteran Population,	Total Federal VA Dollars Spent Within County	Compensation & Pension	Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	County Revenues authorized by ORC	County Revenues Spent
2011	19,754	\$ 74,327,004.04	\$ 36,201,824.16	\$ 3,606,069.72	\$ 897,555.17	\$ 33,621,555.00	\$ 1,708,546.16	\$ 986,878.37
2012	20,682	\$ 73,365,317.83	\$ 31,983,889.00	\$ 3,341,727.00	\$ 1,567,710.90	\$ 36,471,990.93	\$ 1,627,429.00	\$ 991,222.80
2013	20,129	\$ 86,350,188.14	\$ 38,657,472.00	\$ 3,877,048.00	\$ 1,328,300.03	\$ 42,487,368.11	\$ 1,627,479.00	\$ 1,035,497.00
2014	19,886	\$ 99,788,021.25	\$ 47,757,592.00	\$ 4,570,489.00	\$ 1,091,177.52	\$ 46,368,762.74	\$ 1,681,008.00	\$ 1,131,939.00
2015	19,403	\$ 96,670,860.27	\$ 46,024,665.00	\$ 4,082,831.00	\$ 1,839,629.00	\$ 44,723,735.27	\$ 1,623,113.00	\$ 1,149,049.00
2016	18,072	\$ 103,251,122.50	\$ 52,468,994.50	\$ 4,141,512.00	\$ 1,010,066.00	\$ 45,630,550.00	\$ 1,606,956.00	\$ 1,202,770.00
2017	17,493	\$ 106,732,891.87	\$ 51,512,185.86	\$ 3,650,101.27	\$ 1,024,161.00	\$ 50,546,443.74	\$ 1,624,135.27	\$ 1,101,027.00
2018	16,920	\$ 110,694,848.47	\$ 51,653,997.00	\$ 3,394,917.00	\$ 1,181,539.00	\$ 54,464,395.47	\$ 1,665,373.15	\$ 1,193,328.59
2019	15,247	\$ 125,368,080.45	\$ 59,413,459.00	\$ 3,624,269.00	\$ 856,341.00	\$ 61,474,011.45	\$ 1,674,491.32	\$ 1,167,938.30
2020	14,847	\$ 132,359,489.50	\$ 63,135,485.00	\$ 3,625,003.00	\$ 614,735.00	\$ 64,984,266.50	\$ 1,680,980.55	\$ 1,135,351.81
COUNTY REVENUES SPENT IN 2020 COMPARED TO 2011 IS AN INCREASE OF:							\$148,473.44	
TOTAL FEDERAL VA DOLLARS SPENT WITHIN COUNTY INCREASED FROM '11-'20 BY:							\$58,032,485.46	
SINCE 2011, COUNTY VETERAN POPULATION HAS DECREASED BY:							4,907	
2020 'FEDERAL VA DOLLARS SPENT' TO 'COUNTY DOLLARS SPENT' =							117 to 1	
TOTAL FEDERAL VA DOLLARS SPENT WITHIN COUNTY INCREASED FROM 19-20 BY:							\$6,991,409.05	

The increase of Federal spending from the Department of Veterans Affairs increased each year, with exception of one, over the last ten. For the first time the Federal expenditure in Trumbull County exceeded that of Mahoning County in 2020. It goes into significant detail, showing the total funds the office is eligible to request in comparison to what is spent by the office. Most notable in the diagram is that the for every \$1 spent by Trumbull County, \$117 are returned to the county by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and more than half of the \$117 is going directly to veteran residents of Trumbull County.



## *Summary*

2021 continued to be a challenging year to provide services, just as 2020 had been. Our office continues to find innovative ways to provide services for the veterans of Trumbull County. The agencies that we work with (VA, Ohio Department of Veteran Services, DoD) have moved quickly toward providing services, and in some cases, relying solely on the use of technology. Trumbull County Veteran Service office is aware of this shift in providing services, and prepared to do so, while also understanding that many veterans in Trumbull County are not prepared for the implementation of technology. At the peak of the pandemic in 2020, our office made bold steps to be able to allow for our service officers to be able to continue their work remotely, which helped to be able to keep open communication with our clients, even when our clients were isolating or quarantining from illness.

Our service officers are accredited and certified by the State of Ohio, the Department of Veterans Affairs and as many as five Congressionally Chartered Veteran Service Organizations. The VA recognizes these service officers as contracted employees, and each of them have gone through a Federal Background check by the FBI, so they may be issued Federal Identification, and have the ability to represent the veterans of Trumbull County to the best of their ability.

This enables us to file a claim through the VA and then have access to the Veterans file. This has required extensive training for our staff on federal guidelines and privacy policies. This is an enormous benefit to our veterans and their families and saves us much time when navigating the claim file to find out if there are any problems. We recently had two of our accredited service offices go through and become certified to do appeals before the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) in Washington DC.

Our objectives are:

1. Ensure that the veterans of the County are aware of the benefits that they are due and that they receive those benefits, whether they are federal, state, or county benefits,
2. Continue to work with and grow a network throughout the County so that the citizens understand the accomplishments of the veterans and the successes they will bring to Trumbull County in the future.

Our office ensures the veterans of our county receive the maximum benefits they are due by law. The amount of money that our veterans receive from benefits each year significantly reduces the strain on both state and county funds. Each veteran or widow that receives a VA pension or compensation check has an increased income, which brings dollars into our county. VA benefits also help pay for assisted living or in-home healthcare for our senior veterans and their widows. This reduces the amount of assistance that other county agencies have to provide our Veterans and their widows.



With record numbers of Veterans becoming aware of and applying for benefits along with the aging population of our Vietnam Veterans, we must continue to ensure that we can provide the expertise when applying for Veterans Benefits. We will continue to provide the much-needed assistance that our veterans and their family members deserve as well as continue to operate in a conservative manner. The needs of our veterans are the utmost important thing we do when reaching any decision. I know it is with great credit to the Trumbull County Veterans Service Commission as well as the Trumbull County Commissioners and their Administration that our veterans and their families will continue to receive the much-needed assistance that they deserve.

Respectfully,  
Herm Breuer  
Director/Veterans Service Officer  
Trumbull County, Ohio  
Army

Cari Delgado  
Deputy Director/Veteran Service Officer  
Navy

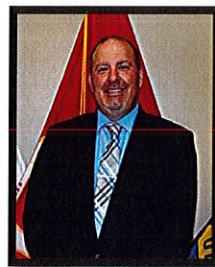


Mark Isenberg  
Senior Service Officer  
Army

Robin LeDuc  
CVSO  
Navy/USMC

Charles Ciapala  
CVSO  
USMC

Chris Buydos  
CVSO  
Army



Jessica Yonkey  
Administrative Clerk

Tom Durham  
Transportation Coordinator  
Army



## *Trumbull County Veteran Service Commissioners*



Gary Guteilus  
President, Disabled American Veterans  
US Army



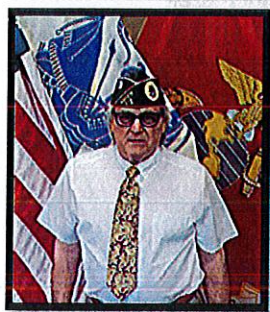
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