



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2022





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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA) is pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report. I am grateful to the nearly 1,200 members of the IDVA team who have put their best foot forward in helping us achieve our mission:

The mission of IDVA is to ensure Illinois' veterans and their families thrive, by connecting them to their earned benefits—delivered by a professional team of caring partners who have dedicated themselves to ensuring a positive and measurable impact on those we are privileged to serve.

I am grateful to Governor JB Pritzker for his commitment to veterans by supporting IDVA's efforts and meaningful legislation impacting veterans. Thank you to the members of the General Assembly who also initiate and support legislation benefiting veterans and IDVA's budget.

The IDVA home administrators are dedicated health care professionals who approach their jobs as a vocation. For over two years they have managed an unending pandemic that won't let up and neither will they. This has not just been a health care crisis, it has been a battle of lifting the morale of a fatigued staff, maintaining a community when we have been forced to distance, and ensuring veterans and their families that we stand by them. I am proud to serve with Angie Simmons (Anna), T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson (Chicago) Brandi Melton (LaSalle), Tanya Smith (Manteno and the Prince Home), and Troy Culbertson (Quincy).

Their teams, Directors of Nursing, CNAs, VNACs, Social Workers, Activities Directors, Dietary, and Maintenance arrive every day prepared to deliver compassionate and high-level care. They each play an important role in the quality of life for veterans in our care. This is hard work, and I've heard the stories of why they choose IDVA. This is what I have heard over and over, "I'm staying because of MY veteran." Their love is evident in their care and the many hours worked.

We opened the doors to the Veterans' Home at Chicago, the northside, state of the art, private room home equipped for 200 residents and 300 staff. The \$230 million renovation of The Veterans' Home at Quincy is well under way with a \$200 million federal grant awarded as well as funding from Rebuild Illinois. Our Veteran Service Officers have assisted over 15,000 veterans and filed over 17,000 claims securing \$3,462,915 in claims, a 38% increase over FY21. Our VSOs go to the ends of the earth to ensure that veterans obtain their earned benefits and services, and it's not always easy. In many circumstances the VSO is a counselor, confidant, and a friend. Their scope of work spans from unraveling complicated individual cases to providing fishing licenses. The State Approving Agency provided Illinois veterans with opportunities to train at 1,118 approved education and training facilities. The State Approving Agency also approved 596 apprenticeship and on-the-job training facilities for the use of veterans, military service members, and their families. The SAA's efforts have resulted in Illinois leading the nation in active apprenticeship and OJT programs. Mark Patterson, Field Services Manager, and Dan Wellman, Veterans Education and Training (VETS) Administrator, lead these teams, and I am grateful for their commitment as veterans and IDVA leadership.

We also awarded over \$932,000 in grants to advance veterans programs through the Veterans' Cash Lottery program.

IDVA is also supported by a strong headquarters team with offices in Chicago and Springfield that provide command and control including communications, fiscal, human resources, information and technology, legal, legislative, operations, and programs. Each person's contribution is critical and together, we stand united to achieve our mission of serving Illinois' veterans at the highest level.

When I began this role in April 2021, I presented a Six-Point Plan for the Future of IDVA. As I reported to the General Assembly last spring, Mission Accomplished. Key leadership roles were filled including Chief of Staff, Senior Home Administrator, Women Veterans and Program Manager, Infection Preventionist, Legislative Liaison, Public Information Officer, and an administrator for the Veterans' Home at LaSalle. Having served in their roles for several months, their contributions are evident and will continue to impact the mission of IDVA. We clearly defined roles and fostered interdepartmental collaboration. Communication makes all this possible by enhancing dialogue which we've achieved through agency-wide email and my weekly Tuesdays with Terry message. It is imperative that we have two-way communications so that IDVA employees in the field and in Central and Chicago office are well connected. We also redesigned IDVA's website making it more accessible and user-friendly and rebranded all agency collateral.

For the veterans' homes, infection control is the highest priority in addressing COVID-19 and any other potential infection. The homes have strict protocols, procedures, and policies in place to prevent infiltration and mitigate spread. We welcomed a new Infection Preventionist who is working closely with each home to guide them in adhering to the systems in place to protect veterans and staff, while advising the IDVA Infection Control committees and working with our partners at the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Over the past year, we have strengthened existing policies and introduced new ones to address the evolving needs of our veterans and how we serve them. We are also updating our technology needs at the Central and Chicago offices and the homes, particularly systems to modernize safety within the homes. These initiatives have positioned the department to better serve Illinois' veterans, and I am proud of our team for rolling up their sleeves, doing hard work, and staying connected to one another.

We look forward to even better things in 2023 as we continue our efforts to ensure veterans and their families thrive in Illinois!

Sincerely,
Terry Prince, Director

6-POINT PLAN UPDATE

1. Restructure senior leadership
 - Clear Chain of Command
2. Improve culture and communication
 - All staff have email
 - Tuesdays with Terry – Direct link
 - Website redesign/Collateral updates
 - Internal/external newsletter
 - Veteran-CENTERED in all efforts
3. Prioritize infection control
 - Superb support from IDPH, MOU with USDVA, Infection Prevention Committees
4. Hire experts in key roles
 - LaSalle Home Administrator, IDVA Chief of Staff, Senior Veterans Home Administrator, Women's Veterans Program Manager, Public Information Officer, Legislative Liaison
5. Implement clear plans and policies
 - Policies in place for COVID prevention, masking, testing, PPE, staffing
6. Enhance department technology
 - Computer refresh in-progress; updated cell phones for VSOs





AGENCY OVERVIEW

Illinois has a long and proud history of service to veterans which began in 1886 with the establishment of the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Home for Civil War Veterans. Created through legislation enacted in 1945, the Illinois Veterans' Commission was responsible for state services to veterans until 1976, when it was succeeded by the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA). The IDVA, created by Public Act 79-376, is charged with responsibility for the welfare and needs of Illinois veterans, their dependents, and survivors. IDVA maintains administrative offices in Springfield and Chicago, five veterans' homes, and 39 full-time veteran service offices and 38 itinerant offices across the state.

Through the field offices, veterans and their families obtain assistance in navigating the complex system of federal, state, and local resources and benefits. Acting as veterans' authorized representatives, the Department's accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) provide assistance in presenting claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and other state agencies on behalf of veterans and their dependents or survivors; these claims may include disability compensation, education benefits, pensions, insurance, health care, and veteran home applications.

IDVA can provide skilled nursing and memory care for up to 1,134 veterans and Domiciliary care for 88 veterans each month through the Veterans' Homes in Anna, Chicago, LaSalle, Manteno, and Quincy. These homes primarily provide licensed, skilled care beds available to veterans and eligible spouses and widows; Quincy and Anna also have a limited number of domiciliary beds for residents who do not require skilled care. The IDVA's Veterans' Homes are surveyed annually by the USDVA and licensed and inspected by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The IDVA also provides housing and supportive services for homeless veterans at the 15-bed Prince Home in Manteno.

IDVA assists in coordinating services and activities among state and federal agencies, as well as with non-profit organizations that serve veterans. To accomplish this, IDVA staff serve on statutory committees and task forces and work in partnership with several federal agencies, including the USDVA, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the U.S. Department of Labor. IDVA has established and maintains a network of advocacy with a variety of state agencies including the Department of Employment Security, the Department of Corrections, the Department on Aging, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Military Affairs, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. Our team proudly supports nationwide suicide prevention through the Governor's Challenge.

The administrative oversight of the IDVA is conducted at Central Office in Springfield and a second office in Chicago—housing the following departments: communications, fiscal, human resources, information and technology, legal, legislative, operations, and programs. Each division is led by a professional with extensive experience in their field. This strong support system works closely with the Veteran Service Offices and Home Administrators to ensure that they are equipped and supported to serve veterans efficiently and effectively.



ADMINISTRATION

Terry Prince

Director

Anthony Vaughn

Assistant Director

Melissa Black

Chief of Staff

Jennifer Franklin

Assistant to the Director

Cynthia McKee

Assistant to the Assistant Director
(Acting)

Alicia Utterback

Assistant to the Chief of Staff

Sara Augustinas

Legislative Liaison

Maureen S. Hartigan

Public Information Officer

Brittany Hawkins

General Counsel

Kourtney Hopkins

Senior Program Manager
Women Veterans Coordinator

Franklin "Jay" Johnson

Equal Employment Officer

Michelle Kuntz

Chief Fiscal Officer

Danielle N. Luevano

Property Manager (through 4/22)
Operations and Programs Division
Manager (beginning 5/22)

Cindy Reynolds

Infection Preventionist

Craig Morrison

Human Resources Manager

Lisa Tisdale

Labor Relations Manager

Connie Watson

Grants Manager

Dan Wellman

Veterans Education and Training
Services (VETS) Administrator

Crystal Womack

Senior Program Policy Advisor

Vacant

Chief Internal Auditor

Field Services

Mark Patterson

Field Services Manager
(Also served as Operations and Programs
Division Manager until 5/22)

Ken Bonner

Field Training Coordinator

Robert Iverson III

Claims Management Center (Acting)
Metro Region Supervisor

Kimberly Fuiten

Central Region Supervisor
(Acting)

Jeffrey Lewis

Southern Region Supervisor (Acting)

Melissa Beckford

Northern Region Supervisor

Veterans' Homes

Angela Simmons

Senior Home Administrator
and
Veterans' Home Administrator
Anna

T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson

Veterans' Home Administrator
Chicago

Brandi Melton

Veterans' Home Administrator
LaSalle

Tanya Smith

Veterans' Home Administrator
Manteno

Troy Culbertson

Veterans' Home Administrator
Quincy

Wali Lewis

Prince Home Program Administrator

Gwen Diehl

Veterans' Home Coordinator

FIELD SERVICES



IDVA Veteran Service Officers at Central Office in Springfield

Field Services Division Summary of Activity for FY 2022

USDVA BENEFITS

Veterans Pension	167
Widows Pension.....	185
Veterans Comp	3,183
Widows DIC	331
Parents DIC	0
Appeals/Hearings.....	406
Hospital.....	428
Champ VA.....	127

Introducing IDVA University

IDVA Field Services introduces IDVA University (IDVA-U), a new Veterans Service Officer Training Platform. This training is the standard for state title certification and accreditation through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The 12-module training program, modeled around the federal VA’s Training Responsibility, Involvement, and Preparation (TRIP) training program will be required by all VSOs. Each module is designed to equip VSOs with the tools, resources, and knowledge to better navigate the benefit process with veterans. The IDVA U modules are an opportunity to gain integral information for being a successful VSO. It also brings together VSOs with many years of experience and lessons learned. It is a space to collaborate, share ideas, and build relationships. Once all modules are complete and the final exam passed, a VA Form 21a will be sent to the VAs Office of General Council for accreditation, better preparing IDVA Field Services to fulfill its mission of empowering veterans and their families to thrive.

IDVA University Modules
 Module 1: Introduction to the VA, IDVA and Veterans Service Organizations
 Module 2: Introduction to Reference Material
 Module 3: Basic State Benefits
 Module 4: Introduction to Identifying the Claim, Issues, and the Development Process
 Module 5: Preparing Claims and Development
 Module 6: Burial Benefits and Death Claims
 Module 7: Service Records, Medical Records
 Module 8: Dependence Development
 Module 9: Developing Pension Claims
 Module 10: Special Issues Claims Development
 Module 11: Award letter and Ancillary Benefits
 Module 12: Appeals/Appeals Modernization Act, VSO Tools, PIV Process, and the Final Exam.

Annual VSO Training

The IDVA VSOs gathered in Springfield with members of the Illinois Veterans Assistance Commissions for the annual VSO Training. This was the start of a long series of collaborative efforts with IDVA’s county partners. This partnership enhances the services our veteran communities have access to by working together as an advocacy team. This was the first conference with IDVA’s new Training Coordinator Kenneth Bonner. Ken was the Veterans Service Officer in Will County, Joliet. He has a short and long-term vision for the training activities to enhance how VSOs advocate for veterans.



Mark Patterson, Field Services Manager, and Melissa Beckford, Northern Division Supervisor, celebrated the opening of the 100th Military Family Starbucks just outside the Great Lakes Naval Station.

EDUCATION

Education and Training

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs' – Veterans Education and Training Section consists of three veterans' education and training programs: one federally funded program and two state programs. The federal program is the State Approving Agency, and the state programs are the Deceased, Disabled, and MIA/POW Veterans' Dependents Educational Opportunity Grant and the Deceased, Disabled, and MIA/POW Veterans Dependent Scholarship.

State Approving Agency

The State Approving Agency (SAA) is a completely federally funded program established to approve and audit for compliance college and non-college degree programs, vocational flight training, apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT) programs, license and certification tests, and Small Business Development Centers Entrepreneurship Courses, so that educational assistance benefits may be paid to veterans and other eligible persons under programs administered by the USDVA.

The following is a list of entitlement programs for which the SAA has approval and supervisory responsibilities within Illinois:

- Montgomery G.I. Bill – Active Duty (Chapter 30)
- Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP Chapter 32)
- Post 9/11 G.I. Bill – (Chapter 33)
- Survivors and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35)
- Montgomery G.I. Bill – Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606)

In FY22, the SAA provided Illinois veterans with opportunities to train at 1,118 approved education and training facilities. These numbers include programs of education at 196 universities, colleges and community colleges, 136 vocational schools, and 251 high schools for dependents using the Survivors and Dependents Education Assistance program. The State Approving Agency also approved 596 apprenticeship and on-the-job training facilities for the use of veterans, military service members, and their families. The SAA's efforts have resulted in Illinois leading the nation in active apprenticeship and OJT programs. During FY22, the SAA supervised 328 active apprenticeship and OJT training facilities with at least one veteran in training.

During FY22, the SAA continued to provide education briefings at Naval Station Great Lakes and to National Guard soldiers demobilizing from activation. The SSA also started hosting quarterly regional town hall meetings with approved education and training facilities. The SAA also conducted an extensive social media campaign with print and video products to expand and promote apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs for veterans. They also joined the Student Veterans of America-Illinois as co-sponsors of the Illinois Student Veteran Leader of the Year program.

EDUCATION

Program Approvals and Cancellations

New, Revised, Other Institutions of Higher Learning Approval Actions: 10,151
 Programs and Institutions of Higher Learning Withdrawn: 1470
 New, Revised, Other Non-College Degree Program Actions: 6698
 Programs and Non-College Degree Programs Withdrawn: 447
 New, Revised, Other Apprenticeship Approval Actions: 391
 Programs and Apprenticeships Withdrawn: 6
 Programs and On-The-Job Training Approval Actions: 827
 Programs and On-The-Job Training Programs Withdrawn: 25
 New, Revised, Other Flight School Approval Actions: 5
 Programs and Flight School Programs Withdrawn: 20
 Programs and License and Certification Tests Approval Actions: 53
 Programs and License and Certification Tests Withdrawn: 0
 Total Approval and Withdrawal Actions: 120,093

Deceased, Disabled, and MIA/POW Veterans Dependent Scholarship

The Deceased, Disabled, and MIA/POW Veterans Dependent Scholarship covers tuition and certain fees to an Illinois public university or community college for eligible dependents. The scholarship will cover a maximum of 120 points with points based on a semester hour system.

To be eligible for the scholarship, an applicant must be the spouse, natural child, stepchild under the age of 18 at the time of marriage, adopted child under the age of 18 at the time of adoption, or minor child younger than 18 who is under a court-ordered guardianship for at least two continuous years prior to application, of the veteran to qualify. The veteran must have been an Illinois resident at the time of entering active military service, an Illinois resident within six months after entering Active military service, or a resident of Illinois for at least 15 consecutive years after entering active duty as of the date of application. Information about place of entry into active duty may be found on a Veteran's DD214 (Report of Separation) or Enlistment Contract.

Furthermore, the veteran must meet one of the following criteria in order to qualify – (1) Veteran must have been an MIA (Missing In Action) (2) Veteran must have been a POW (Prisoner of War) (3) Veteran must be rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA) as being 100% permanent and totally disabled by service connected causes (4) Veteran must be rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA) as being 100% permanent and totally disabled by service connected causes due to unemployability (5) Veteran's death must be rated service connected by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA).

If the surviving spouse remarries or if there is a divorce from the veteran or serviceperson, the scholarship benefit for the remarried surviving spouse and stepchildren will terminate on the date of the remarriage or divorce. If the surviving spouse remarries or if there is a divorce from the veteran or serviceperson while the spouse and/or stepchildren are pursuing a course of study, scholarship benefits will be terminated at the end of the term for which they are presently enrolled. All eligible dependents, except for eligible spouses, must begin utilizing the benefit prior to the age of 26.

EDUCATION

In FY22, there were 1,287 claims approved during the fall and spring 2022 terms representing \$4,490,590 of benefits for the program funded at \$3,500,000. Illinois' Educational institutions graciously absorbed the remaining \$990,590.

Deceased, Disabled, and MIA/POW Veterans Dependent Grant

The Deceased, Disabled, and MIA/POW Veterans Dependent Grant provides an annual \$250 grant to each eligible dependent between the ages of 10 and 18 for enrollment in a school or for meeting Illinois compulsory attendance requirements as provided in the Illinois School Code.

To be eligible for the grant, an applicant must be the spouse, natural child, stepchild under the age of 18 at the time of marriage, adopted child under the age of 18 at the time of adoption, or minor child younger than 18 who is under a court-ordered guardianship for at least two continuous years prior to application, of the veteran to qualify. The veteran must have been an Illinois resident at the time of entering active military service, an Illinois resident within six months after entering Active military service, or a resident of Illinois for at least 15 consecutive years after entering active duty as of the date of application. Information about place of entry into active duty may be found on a Veteran's DD214 (Report of Separation) or Enlistment Contract.

Furthermore, the veteran must meet one of the following criteria in order to qualify – (1) Veteran must have been an MIA (Missing In Action) (2) Veteran must have been a POW (Prisoner of War) (3) Veteran must be rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA) as being 100% permanent and totally disabled by service connected causes (4) Veteran must be rated by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA) as being 100% permanent and totally disabled by service connected causes due to unemployability (5) Veteran's death must be rated service connected by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA).

Other State Veterans' Education Benefit Programs

The **Illinois Veteran Grant (IVG)** waives tuition and certain fees at all Illinois state-supported universities and community colleges for Illinois residents. An individual must:

- be a veteran.
- reside in Illinois six months before entering the service.
- have at least one full year of active duty in the US Armed Forces; and
- return to Illinois within six months of discharge from the service.

Applications and additional information are available from VSOs, college financial aid offices, or the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, 1755 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, IL 60015, phone 800-899-4722. The applicant can seek assistance at any IDVA Veterans' Service Office. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission adjudicates and administers this program.

The **Children of Veterans Scholarship** provides each county in the state with three (3) tuition waivers annually to the University of Illinois for the benefit of children of veterans of World War II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam Conflict, the Siege of Beirut, the Grenada Conflict, Southwest Asia Conflict, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, with preference to the children of deceased and disabled veterans. Such children shall be entitled to a scholarship at any campus of the University of Illinois for a term of at least four consecutive years. The University of Illinois administers this tuition waiver program, and one may acquire further information about the program from the University of Illinois Financial Aid Office.

EDUCATION



left to right: Dr. Keith Champagne- Vice President of Student Development – Loyola University Chicago (LUC), Alex Pirila- Associate Director of Military Veteran Student Services – LUC, Dan Wellman, Veterans Education and Training Services (VETS) Administrator – IDVA, Carly May Fournier- Recipient of the Student Veteran Leader of the Year Award, Stephen Mitten, S.J.- Advance Lecturer, School of Environmental Sustainability – LUC, Dr. William Rodriguez- Dean of Students

Student Veteran Leader of the Year Award

Carly May Fournier, United States Navy Veteran and recent graduate of Loyola University of Chicago's School of Environmental Science and Sustainability, is the recipient of the Illinois Student Veteran Leader of the Year Award. As the Military and Veteran Student Services Student Coordinator for programming and initiatives for the University, she has dedicated herself to building a strong and supported student veteran community. When she came to Loyola, she recognized great opportunity for growth in programs and support for student veterans. She jumped in with both feet where she has contributed to building a strong foundation for a program that can serve student veterans for years to come. She is also Vice President of the Student Veteran Association.

The purpose of the Illinois Student Veteran Leader of the Year Award is to recognize student veterans for the quality of their engagement with their college/university and/or the wider community. This individual portrays both strong leadership characteristics

and academics. They serve as a role model for the student veteran body by volunteering, participating in events, excelling in school, reaching out to fellow student veterans, and portraying an overall positive attitude. Nominees are reviewed by a committee. The award was presented by Dan Wellman, IDVA's Veterans Education and Training Services (VETS) Administrator.

Education Looks Different for Everyone

The IDVA Veterans Education and Training Section (VETS) team is poised to help veterans and their families obtain earned education and training benefits. The opportunities are vast including college degree and certificate programs, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, flight training, and correspondence courses.

To educate veterans about the G.I. Bill®, the Education team created a social media campaign highlighting real-life stories of how Illinois veterans have redirected their lives by participating in the G.I. Bill® program.

Meet Victor Fulgencio, a United States Marine Corps Veteran who is completing his second year of a five-year apprenticeship to become a journeyman pipefitter through the Pipefitters Local 597 in Mokena, Illinois. Victor, a Motor Transport operator in the Marine Corps, attributes his training and experience as a Marine with preparing him for the apprenticeship program. "The program is challenging. We have welding deadlines and classroom work where we learn about pipefitting," said Victor. He added, "the G.I. Bill and Housing Allowance helped me get started."

Education looks different for everyone.
How can the GI Bill help you?

"The G.I. Bill and housing allowance helped me to get started."

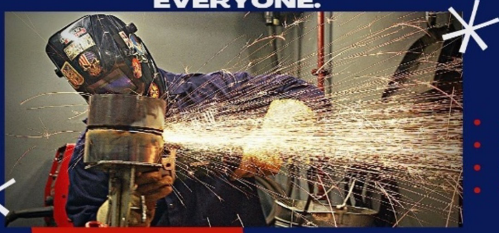
VICTOR FULGENCIO
MARINE CORPS VETERAN
PIPEFITTERS LOCAL 597

For more information please contact Melissa Cushman at
melissa.cushman@illinois.gov or (217)785-4578

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE.



"The G.I. Bill® has been great, coming out of the Army you don't have much money saved up...and it's a huge help not to have to worry about rent and other bills...at first the G.I. Bill covered most of my rent so I didn't have to worry about finances while I first started working."

**Bill Henry - Army Veteran
Apprentice - Pipefitters Local 597**

For more information please contact Melissa Cushman at melissa.cushman@illinois.gov or (217)785-4578

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Meet Bill Henry, a United States Army Veteran, who is finishing his second year of a five-year apprenticeship program through the Pipefitters Local 597 in Mokena, Illinois. A wheeled-vehicle mechanic in the Army, Bill attributes the G.I. Bill to helping him apply his background to a solid civilian career. "By the time you leave the program, you will be confident in what you are doing," said Bill. "The G.I. Bill covered my early expenses, so I could save and build a nest-egg while working."

GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government Web site at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

Meet Marine Corps Veteran Luke Glass who directed his G.I. Bill toward training as a maintenance mechanic with UPS. Luke trains at the Chicago-area consolidated hub, which averages 1.8 million packages a day through its facility and up to three million during the holidays. Luke's primary responsibility is to maintain the equipment that moves packages through the facility. The 48-month apprenticeship program requires both classroom and on-the-job training. "As a maintenance mechanic, I make sure the building continues to run and get packages out of the building to trailers in a timely manner," said Luke. Luke attributes the G.I. Bill with helping him successfully transition from the Marine Corps to a solid civilian career.

Education looks different for everyone.



Learn how the G.I. Bill® can help you.

"MY FIANCE AND I ARE LOOKING AT PURCHASING SOME LAND AND THE G.I. BILL WILL FREE UP OTHER RESOURCES FOR THE DOWN PAYMENT."

**Luke Glass - Marine Corps Veteran
UPS Apprentice**

For more information, please contact Melissa Cushman at melissa.cushman@illinois.gov or (217)785-4578

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United States Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Dennis McDonough Visits Chicago

Director Terry Prince joined United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dennis McDonough at a round table with student veterans from universities in the Chicago area to talk about their challenges, concerns, and solutions for maximizing their educational experience. The round table was hosted at Loyola University Chicago's downtown campus.

VETERANS CASH LOTTERY



Veterans Cash Lottery

The Veterans Cash Lottery ticket is Illinois’ Lottery’s specialty ticket supporting Illinois veterans. The promotion and sale of this specialty ticket begins in December each year. All net proceeds from the sales of Veterans Cash Lottery tickets are deposited into the Illinois Veterans Assistance Fund, an interest-bearing account in the State Treasury. Through the Veterans Cash Committee, the IDVA awards grants to governmental organizations and tax-exempt entities that apply for funding to address veterans’ needs in the areas of post-traumatic stress, homelessness, health insurance costs, long-term care, disability benefits, and employment and training. Since February 2006, the Grant Committee has authorized over **397** grants totaling **\$18.3 million**. In FY22, the committee awarded 15 grants totaling **\$932,584**. The grants

typically range from \$25,000 - \$100,000 per year.

The Veterans Cash Grant program has set high standards to meet statutory, reporting, and compliance standards. The result is a more defined, accurate, and transparent granting process. The application, grant agreement, and Quarterly/Final Reports provide for an increased grantee organizational structure of information and accountability through the life cycle of the grant.

The Grant Committee consists of three (3) voting members who meet quarterly to review the grant requests. They evaluate those grant applications against a rubric, make selections, and then forward the selections to the IDVA Director for approval. The voting members of the Grant Committee for FY22 are Edgar Delgado (a Veteran-at Large), Greg Curran (IVAC), and Dr. Jean Douglas, also the committee chairperson.

Summary of Activity for FY 2022

GRANTS MADE BY CATEGORY	NUMBER OF GRANTS	TOTAL AMOUNT
Post-Traumatic Stress.....	5	\$236,135
Veteran Disability Benefits.....	2	\$151,113
Health Insurance Costs.....	0	\$0
Veteran Long-Term Care.....	1	\$99,990
Veteran Employment & Employment Training.....	4	\$256,635
Veteran Homelessness.....	3	\$188,710
TOTAL	15	\$932,583

OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS

The **Legislative Division** works with the Governor's legislative office, elected officials, and Senate and House staff and is responsible for identifying agency needs that can be met through legislation and drafting legislation to meet those needs. These become IDVA's legislative initiatives for the year, and the legislative division moves the legislation through the legislative process. During this process, the Legislative Division provides legislators with fact sheets and is available to discuss any questions or concerns. On some IDVA initiatives, the Legislative Division and other senior leaders testify in committee.

In 2022, IDVA had four legislative initiatives. Two were bills that passed both chambers and were signed into law, and two were joint resolutions that were adopted by both chambers.

- SB 3762 clearly identified and aligned eligibility for the Children of Deceased Veterans Act (a secondary education program) and the MIA-POW Scholarship (a post-secondary education program). It also clarified a 15-year consecutive year residency eligibility requirement. Its passage has positive impacts for veterans and their dependents.
- HB 4682 allowed IDVA to make grants to organizations that address veterans' "behavioral health" instead of being limited to PTSD alone. Its passage has a profound impact for veterans and their families as more organizations providing behavioral health services for veterans will be eligible for grant dollars.
- SJR 28 designated the entire portion of U.S. Highway 20 in Illinois, beginning at the Illinois/Iowa border and ending at the Illinois/Indiana border, as the "Illinois Medal of Honor Highway," to honor current and future Medal of Honor recipients from Illinois.
- HJR 64 declared June 12, 2022 "Women's Veterans Day" in Illinois, in recognition of the anniversary of the day the Women's Armed Services Integration Act was signed into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1948.

In addition to drafting and following the progress of its own initiatives, the Legislative Division also monitors legislation related to agency needs and operations. In 2022, the Legislative Division monitored over 40 bills that pertained to veterans, servicemembers, and their families. The Legislative Division also monitored approximately 30 bills that pertained to other areas, specifically public health and state agencies.

The Legislative Division also provides assistance with constituent questions and concerns. Legislators maintain offices in their districts, and their staff typically reach out to the Legislative Division on behalf of constituents. The Legislative Division then connects them to veteran service officers or program staff, as applicable. Over the last six months, the Legislative Division has received and worked with IDVA staff to close over 100 cases.

The **Human Resources (HR) Division** is responsible for all matters pertaining to the employees of the Agency such as: talent acquisition, compensation and benefits, time and attendance, training and development, workers' compensation, as well as unemployment claims. This unit also oversees personnel operations at the five Veterans' Homes through their respective Human Resources Offices. Each HR Office works with the Veterans' Home management team to develop long-term strategies for the growth and development of the Agency. The HR staff also provides essential Agency information and policy guidance. Throughout FY22, IDVA's five long-term care facilities, like many health care facilities across the country has suffered extreme staff shortages. HR has diligently sought creative ways to recruit and retain talent to care for our veterans. With a transition in HR leadership, the agency is undergoing shifts to accommodate its growth.

OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS

The **Legal Division** serves as the Legal Counsel for the Department, and the Chief Legal Counsel reports directly to the agency Director and the Governor's Office of the General Counsel. The Legal Division staff interprets laws and regulations; provides legal advice and counsel to senior Department staff on agency investigations and employment issues; coordinates and prepares matters for litigation or administrative hearings; provides legal advice and assistance to the EEO Office; provides assistance and review of contractual and procurement matters; reviews administrative rules or proposed legislation for legislative consideration; and provides assistance with reviewing/drafting agency policies. In addition, the Deputy General Counsel serves as the Department's Ethics Officer and the Freedom of Information Act Officer. The Assistant General Counsels support the day-to-day operations and routine legal work product required of the Department. The Legal Division and Chief Legal Counsel welcome questions or concerns from our staff, valued partners, and members of the public.

The **Veterans' Homes Coordinator** conducts long-range planning for future capital projects to meet the care needs of residents of the Illinois Veterans' Homes and preserves the State's facilities and capital assets; serves as liaison with the Capital Development Board (CDB), IDPH, the Health Facilities and Services Review Board, and the USDVA for capital improvement projects.

The **Operations and Programs Division** has two major areas of responsibility that support all areas of the agency. Operations staff consists of the Supply & Services Section and the Records Section. First, Supplies and Services Section, works in conjunction with all other divisions in ordering and distributing supplies, and printed material such as forms, booklets, newsletters, brochures, posters, banners, etc. and, if necessary, coordinates external printing requirements. This section is responsible for the maintenance management of the Central Office automobile fleet of five (5) vehicles. It is also responsible for the incoming and outgoing correspondence, with 7,272 pieces processed in FY 2022. Supplies & Services printed and distributed a new suite of collateral to all VSOs and other partners to share with veterans around the state.

Also, part of Operations is the Records Section. It handles requests for discharges from veterans, service verification from authorized third parties (Funeral Homes, VAC's, USDVA and parties authorized by the veteran), Veteran Service Office requests for non-automated records in Central Office. This section is also continuously scanning veteran records that have been obtained through the years that pre-date automated capabilities. There are records for more than 1.9 million veterans. Central Office Reception is also a part of the Records Section and directs callers to the appropriate area to handle inquiries and comments received through our main phone line. They also assist in records requests and processing of special program initiatives. This division also houses more than 1.9 million veterans' records, dating from the Civil War Era to the present, and is responsible for recording discharges and maintaining a Roll of Honor of deceased veterans in Illinois. To further enhance the department's ability to store and utilize these records, an ongoing project to convert these documents into electronic format is underway; to date 5,241,754 military documents have been added to the electronic database.

The Programs Division handles state grants/benefits based on the veteran's service or disability criteria and survivorship based on Illinois Veteran status. The programs based on the veterans war-time participation are, War Compensation (Bonuses for WWII, Korean, Vietnam, Desert Storm and Global War on Terrorism); benefits based on Survivors Compensation to a spouse or qualifying dependent; The programs based on service-connected disability criteria are; Specially Adapted Housing Grant and Disabled Veterans Property Tax Relief; The programs based on Veteran Status are War Veterans Grave Registration, Cartage and Erection of Headstone, Marker, or Memorial Marker (USDVA Marker Reimbursement), Mili-



OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMS

tary Plate Eligibility Verification for Secretary of State, and Welcome Home Letters, which identifies benefits and directs veterans returning to Illinois to the source or assistance to pursue the benefits. The Programs Division paid over \$600,000 in state benefits to Veterans across the state of Illinois in FY22.

The **Public Information Officer**: IDVA is dedicated to communicating with veterans across all platforms. The veteran community is broad, and it is integral IDVA reaches them across all platforms with relevant and current information to help them navigate the system to obtain their earned benefits. Whether it is printed literature, social media, website, or electronic newsletters, IDVA is continuously sharing information to help veterans feel connected to the IDVA community.

IDVA's new website, launched in January 2022, is easy to navigate and is packed with relevant information that is continuously being updated to ensure veterans are receiving the information they need.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/Pages>

The *Veterans Connections* newsletter is sent to more than 20,000 veterans, the IDVA community, IDVA veteran service partners, and social media. It can be found on the IDVA website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/about-us/communications/Pages/Illinois-Department-of-Veterans%E2%80%99-Affairs-Newsletter.aspx>

IDVA communicates to veterans and the community about events, programs, and remembrance days through social media on Facebook and Twitter.

Visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs>

Women Veterans Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWomenVeterans/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ilvetsaffairs>



OUTREACH PROGRAMS

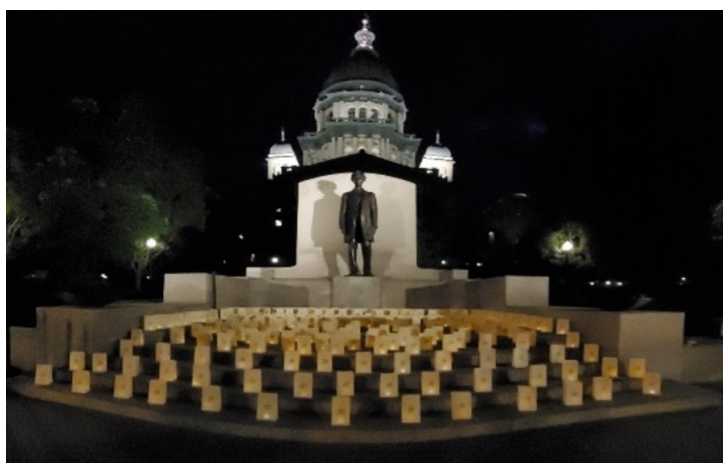
IDVA offers veterans and their families programs and events to foster connections and build strong communities. We are a resource for veterans as they transition from military to civilian life. Our programs are designed to help them build strong foundations to facilitate our mission of helping veterans thrive in Illinois. We also execute programs and events for Gold Star Families to offer support and a community. Throughout the year, we recognize momentous military remembrance days through events, virtual programs, ceremonies, and social media. The programs team also showcases IDVA employees by recognizing days honoring various fields and trades. Additionally, IDVA partners with other veteran service organizations for the prevention of veteran suicide, homelessness, and veteran-related ailments. Programs also collaborates with IVAC (documented on page 34 of this report). Crystal Womack, Senior Program Policy Advisor leads programs for IDVA.

Gold Star Families Programs

Throughout the year, IDVA invites Gold Star families to events honoring their hero and to offer spaces for the community to be together. Their loved one made the ultimate sacrifice in serving our nation, and these gestures demonstrate that we stand by them – they are not alone.

The Springfield and DuQuoin State Fairs' Veterans Days are backdrops for Gold Star Remembrance Day ceremonies where Governor JB Pritzker, Director Terry Prince and other elected officials celebrate the lives of each of those lost service men and women. They are solemn and beautiful services steeped in military traditions and ceremony. Each attending Gold Star family is recognized and presented with a yellow rose.

Gold Star Mother's Day was presented virtually this year featuring images of votives illuminating the State Capitol representing the lives of 336 lost service men and women. The Governor, First Lady, Lt. Governor, and Director Prince shared remarks of condolence and gratitude to those who joined the program. To view the program, click here: <https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs/videos/278641963877828/>



Luminaries representing Illinois' fallen heroes at the Capitol in Springfield.

Illinois is home to 336 Gold Star families. IDVA continues to support them through these opportunities to gather and assist with services and benefits for families of lost service men and women. Anyone who has questions regarding Gold Star related issues should contact IDVA Gold Star Liaison Crystal Womack at crystal.womack@illinois.gov.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS



Gold Star Celebration of Life Ceremony: Springfield State Fair



There are no words to express our gratitude and love for you, the Gold Star Spouse. You represent the best of our nation and we owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude. Our country will always remember and appreciate the heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to keep us free and I promise that IDVA will honor your spouse's sacrifice through its commitment to veterans and their families. This day, and always....we are humbled and honored to recognize you, the courageous spouses.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry Price".

Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs



Gold Star Family Christmas Tree Lighting: James R Thompson Center – Chicago: Assistant Director Anthony Vaughn addresses Gold Star Families at the annual Christmas tree lighting in December.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS



US Marine's Dog Tag Returned to Family 54 Years After Serving in Vietnam

Fifty-four years after United States Marine Corporal David Gary Redenius made the ultimate sacrifice for his nation, his dog tag was returned to his family after being found in Vietnam by Canadian educator and tourist Christian Dumont. Corporal Redenius' sisters Carolyn Redenius and Beverly Warning were presented the dog tags at a ceremony held at the Veterans' Home at Quincy on April 13th. IDVA was the liaison between Mr. Dumont and Ms. Redenius, and planned and executed the ceremony.

IDVA'S Operations and Program Division Manager and retired United States Marine Danielle N. Luevano presents Carolyn Redenius, sister of Corporal Redenius, with her brother's returned dog tag.

Virtual Desert Storm Remembrance Program

Throughout the pandemic, to keep the veteran community united, the IDVA programs team has had to shift many of its in-person events to virtual programming. On Tuesday, February 28th, 2022, the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs streamed the 31st Desert Storm Remembrance Program. While a virtual program cannot replicate being together, this program was well-received by veterans and their families eager to stay connected and remembered. Take a moment and view the link below. <https://multimedia.illinois.gov/dva/DVA-DesertStorm-31st-Remembrance-Ceremony-2022.html>

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Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony

National Vietnam War Veterans Day, designated every March 29th, is a day to honor all the men and women who served and sacrificed. On this day, thousands of organizations from across the nation join to honor and thank over six million Vietnam War veterans and nine million family members for their service and sacrifice. They do this through various ceremonies and vigils where every Vietnam veteran, surviving spouse or family member is properly welcomed home and receives a lapel pin as a small token of the Nation's gratitude. Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs hosted a pinning ceremony in Lincoln, Illinois. The program is a partnership with IDVA and several veteran organizations in Logan and surrounding counties.

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Colonel Robert Tyler, Keynote speaker for the Vietnam Veterans Pinning Ceremony congratulates a fellow Veteran.



Veterans Day at the Springfield and DuQuoin State Fairs

Each summer, IDVA plans an entire day of programming and events for Veterans Day at the State Fairs where hundreds of Illinois veterans come together as a community. A Gold Star Celebration of Life begins the day as a solemn reminder of the sacrifice of service men and women and their families. An expo offers resources for veterans and IDVA staff are on hand to answer questions. The days conclude with a parade honoring Illinois veterans.

Director Prince addresses veterans and their families at the Springfield State Fair.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS



Pearl Harbor Day

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Elk Lodge 158 commemorated the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor with a program featuring the symbolic wreath laying ceremony by the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors.

Operation Rising Spirit

IDVA reached out to the people of Illinois to lift the spirits of veterans in our homes across the state: Anna, Chicago, LaSalle, Manteno, and Quincy during the holiday season beginning with Veterans Day. Thousands of messages were sent from individuals, schools, boys and girls scouts, and communities.



STAFF APPRECIATION



Veterans' Home at Manteno



*National CNA Day:
Sarah Koehler and Rica Richmiller –
Veterans' Home at Quincy CNAs*



*Veterans' Home at Manteno's
social worker Greg Brenneisen*





WOMEN VETERANS

The Women Veterans Program advocates for Women Veterans in the areas including compensation, rehabilitation, outreach healthcare and other issues facing Women Veterans in the community. In this role, Kourtney Hopkins, the Senior Program Manager for the Women Veterans Program determines policy, program objectives, program standards, service output and program services. Through community engagement, the Women Veterans Coordinator partners with local, state, national, and federal organiza-

tions to establish a full-bodied outreach program to address the needs of Women Veterans and develop networks for support. For women interested in learning more, contact Kourtney Hopkins at Kourtney.Hopkins@illinois.gov.

Women’s Veterans Recognition Day: June 11th

On June 11th, women gathered throughout the state in honor of the first Women Veterans Day (June 12th) which recognizes the distinguished service of women in the Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Forces. June 12th marks the anniversary of the signing of the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, which allowed women to serve as permanent, regular members of the Armed Forces. The Women Veterans Stand Down program hosted by National Louis University and University of Chicago covered important topics tailored to women veterans. The hybrid event was a day of learning, sharing, and community building. For more information on IDVA’s women veterans program, please see our website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/programs/women/Pages/default.aspx> or contact Kourtney Hopkins at womenveterans@illinois.gov.

We were thrilled to recognize and celebrate Illinois Women Veterans throughout the state. The Strategic Program Management Office with the Veterans Benefits Administration found women veterans often feel overlooked as a veteran. It is important that we come together as a community and uplift our women veterans. We can start by building a community and sharing our stories. In doing so, we increased awareness on women veterans and the unique experiences and challenges that many of us have faced and continue to face. We all have a story worth sharing. Please take a moment to follow our Illinois Women Veterans page at <https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWomenVeterans/> to celebrate the stories of fellow Illinois women veterans and learn more about women veteran specific resources and happenings available to you.



July 30, 1942: WAVES: On July 30, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Navy Women’s Reserve Act into law, creating what was commonly known as the WAVES –Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. WAVES became a division of the U.S. Navy created during World War II to free up male personnel for sea duty for the duration of World War II. On the first anniversary of the establishment of WAVES, President Roosevelt stated, “In their first year, the WAVES have proved that they are capable of accepting the highest responsibility in the service of their country.” We are proud of the courageous women who volunteered and paved the way for the future generations of women. We are even more proud that one of these amazing women, Loretta Zvibas, is a resident of the Manteno Veterans’ Home! We thank Loretta, and her fellow WAVES, for their selfless service!

HOMELESSNESS



In FY22, the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs joined an Inter-agency Task Force with the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness to develop a plan to prevent and end homelessness in Illinois. The key purpose of the Task Force is to coordinate strategy, effort, and impact in programs for persons experiencing homelessness and housing instabilities. In partnership with the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, IDVA has developed agency-specific commitments dedicated to preventing veteran homelessness.

On June 30, 2022, Director Terry Prince attended the Interagency Task Force Meeting on Homelessness at the Matthew House in South Chicago. The Matthew House is a drop-in center for persons experiencing homelessness and provides a variety of services to the community. Here, the Interagency Task Force had the opportunity to hear impactful stories from persons experiencing homelessness, their needs, and how the Matthew House has helped them in their time of need. IDVA also heard directly from system leaders and service providers who are all on the same mission to end homelessness in Illinois. To learn more about the Matthew House please visit Matthew House Chicago (mhchicago.org).



VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

In FY 22, IDVA renewed its efforts with the Illinois Governor’s Challenge, a statewide initiative of collaboration between state agencies and elected officials to strategize and implement plans targeted towards mental health support and suicide prevention for our veteran population. It is through the Governor’s Challenge that IDVA is afforded the opportunity to focus on and support the three strategic priorities for the Governor’s Challenge: Assessing and Screening for Suicide Risk, Promoting Connectedness, and Improved Care Transitions, and Increasing awareness on Lethal Means Safety.

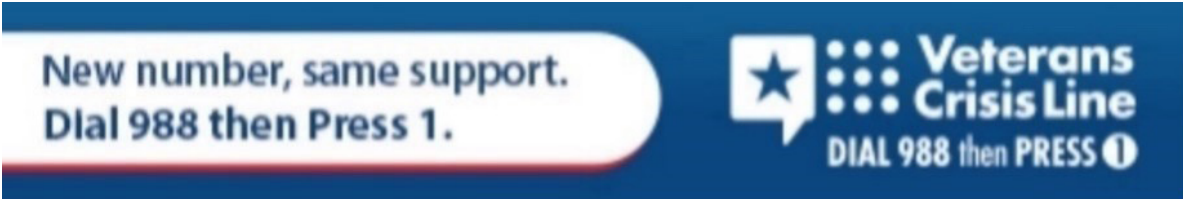
Outside of the Governor’s Challenge, IDVA has enhanced its partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services’ Division of Mental Health, to further collaborate with mental health professionals in implementing evidence-based approaches. It is through IDHS, that IDVA has been allocated \$2.5 million in support of our veteran suicide prevention efforts because of the State Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency Fund. With these funds, IDVA is consulting with a nationwide expert in Veteran Suicide Prevention for a total program evaluation and best practice recommendations in building the first-ever, Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs Veteran Suicide Prevention Program. Additionally, IDVA has contracted with a Personal Services Contractor who brings years of expertise in suicide prevention to assist in building a veteran suicide prevention program. We know that, moving forward, our efforts to curb suicide must take on a new level of preventative efforts in our suicide prevention efforts.

Veteran Service-Related Ailments Task Force

The Veterans Service-Related Ailments Task Force commenced in February 2022. Comprised of a diverse group of veterans and legislators, the Task Force members are working to address the disparities of service-related ailments amongst Illinois veterans. Specifically, the Task Force is charged with:

- 1) Reviewing and making recommendations regarding veterans’ service-related ailments that are not recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, including exploring why certain service-related ailments are not recognized and determining what may be done to have them recognized.
- 2) Assessing the ways the State of Illinois can improve the rate at which disability compensation claims are approved by the federal government and correct the disparity between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ approval of disability compensation for Illinois veterans and that which is approved for veterans in other states.

The Task Force is scheduled to meet through December 2022, at which time they will prepare a report that summarizes its works and makes recommendations resulting from its study that will be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2022. The Task Force is dissolved on December 31, 2023.



ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOMES

ANNA, CHICAGO, LA SALLE, MANTENO AND QUINCY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Each Illinois Veterans' Home is staffed with caring and dedicated professionals who provide quality long-term care and services to each resident. Our goal is to ensure that each resident experience the highest possible quality of life, every single day. Additionally, the Homes are supported by dedicated volunteers from the local communities and veterans' organizations who provide many additional supporting services and activities, which enhances the lives of our

veterans tremendously. Although this was an extremely difficult year, we are grateful for the support of our communities and veteran organizations.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The Illinois Veterans' Homes are subject to the regulatory standards of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and undergo annual licensure inspections by both agencies in areas of resident care, quality, and safety.

ELIGIBILITY

Any honorably discharged veteran is entitled to admission if he or she:

- Has served in the U.S. Armed Forces at least one day during a period recognized by the USDVA as a war period or served in a hostile fire environment and was awarded a campaign or expeditionary medal; or
- Was retired for a service-connected disability or injury; or
- Has served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for 24 months of continuous service or more and enlisted after September 7, 1980; or
- Has served as a Reservist or National Guard member, and the service included being called to Federal Active Duty (excluding service for Active-Duty Training only) and completed the term or completed 20 years of satisfactory service and is otherwise eligible to receive reserve or active-duty retirement benefits; or
- Has been discharged for reasons of hardship or released from active duty due to a reduction in the U.S. Armed Forces before the completion of the required period of service; and
- Entered the service as a resident of Illinois or has been a resident of Illinois for one year immediately preceding the date of application for admission; and
- Is disabled by disease, wounds, or otherwise, and because of disability is incapable of earning a living.

Peacetime veterans with one year of honorable military service may also be eligible for admission, and other qualifying conditions, as required, must be met.

Admission to an Illinois Veterans' Home is based upon:

- The ability of the Home to provide adequate and appropriate care and services required by the person's medical diagnoses and assessed needs, and:
- An available bed in the category required by the veteran's medical conditions and assessed needs.



Illinois Veterans' Homes Administrators: T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson (Chicago), Tanya Smith (Manteno) Troy Culbertson (Quincy), Angela Simmons (Anna), and Brandi Melton (LaSalle)

ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOMES

DOMICILIARY CARE

Our Homes in Anna and Quincy have independent living domiciliary services which are open to eligible Veterans, non-veteran Spouses, and National Guard or Reserve Forces of the United States who have completed 20 years of satisfactory service and are eligible to receive reserve or active-duty retirement benefits.

WAITING LISTS

When required, waiting lists are established by each Home. Veterans whose applications are accepted, but who cannot be immediately admitted to the facility, are placed on the facility waiting list and are prioritized on a "first come-first served" basis. COVID-19 impacted admissions of each home as measures were taken to ensure safe admissions.

Separate waiting lists are prepared for general Skilled Care, Special Needs Care, and Domiciliary, if there are separate units for this type of care.

ADMISSION PRIORITIES

Priority is to serve wartime veterans. If there are no eligible wartime veterans on the waiting list, the second priority is given to peacetime veterans. At homes located in Anna and Quincy, spouses of residents or widows of veterans who are otherwise eligible for admission are eligible for admission to domiciliary units when there are no wartime or peacetime veterans on the waiting list.

COSTS OF CARE

Residents pay a monthly maintenance fee based on individual income and ability-to-pay. The monthly charge covers room, food (including special diets and supplements), medication, medical care, recreation and activities, and some special therapy or treatments prescribed by the attending physician.

Those residents whose income and assets are within the guidelines specified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) may qualify for an Aid & Attendance (A&A) allowance. Residents who receive this allowance will pay an additional, separate A&A charge, in addition to the monthly maintenance fee. The A&A charge is equal to the amount of the allowance provided by the USDVA.

Some costs of care that are not covered include but may not be limited to: Durable Medical Equipment such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, dental care, prostheses, and special wheelchairs or mechanical devices. Such costs must be paid directly to the providers by the resident or responsible party.

The cost of care is met through a combination of the maintenance fee paid by each resident, per diem granted by USDVA and appropriated general revenue funds (GRF).

ACTIVITIES

The Homes provide a full range of social and therapeutic activities for residents, both inside and outside of the facility. Every member is encouraged to participate in as many of the activities and programs as possible. Some examples of activities include card games, bingo parties, cooking and crafts, religious services, exercise and fitness, entertainment, and outdoor activities. COVID-19 restricted many activities, however, the administrators adapted to provide as much activity as possible.

Representatives of national, state, and local veterans' organizations frequently visit the Homes, Resident Advisory Groups (RAG) and Veterans' Advisory Councils (VAC) at each Home, work to assure that quality standards are maintained, and that the special needs of our veterans are always met.

THE ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT ANNA



Anna Home Administrator Angela Simmons

The Illinois Veterans' Home at Anna (IVH-Anna) is a 50-bed, skilled care nursing facility with six apartments. Situated on a 16.1-acre site in Union County, the Home provides long-term skilled nursing care services, rehabilitative, and social services.

The Home has a staff of 88 employees, who strive to provide individualized care in a homelike environment, by focusing on the wellness and strengths of each person that lives there. They do this through various activities based on individual capabilities.

The Illinois Veterans' Home-Anna offers numerous activities of interest to residents, thanks in part to the strong support and assistance of dedicated volunteers from veterans' organizations and the community. In addition, IVH-Anna members enjoy the serenity and peacefulness of a Sensory Garden designed specifically for residents with Alzheimer's and related dementia.

The plan and initial design for a 44-bed expansion at IVH-Anna is nearly complete, however, capital funding for this project has not yet been appropriated. When constructed, this project will enlarge the dining room and multi-purpose room, construct a new central kitchen, and will also provide a secure unit that will better address the special needs of residents with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. The USDVA Medical Center at Marion is the hospital of jurisdiction for the IVH-Anna.

Anna Homes' Kitchen: Behind the Scenes

Melissa Campbell, Dietician at the Veterans' Home at Anna, said that her approach to eating wisely is simple, "Choose the correct foods and eat them at the correct time." Serving three meals a day and snacks to more than 50 residents requires careful meal planning and preparation. Melissa, a Certified Dietary Manager who earned her undergraduate degree in food nutrition from Southern Illinois University, plans meals on a four-week cycle. She consults a food committee and encourages her team to have fun in the kitchen by experimenting with new recipes and ideas. Melissa also monitors clean up to see what is left on plates – a sure survey of how meals are being received. She relies on a spreadsheet to track special dietary needs of residents and make substitutions as needed. Melissa is insistent that her vendors provide high-quality, fresh ingredients to enhance the meals she prepares. Fresh vegetables and fruit are always on the menu and lunch and dinner always begin with soup. Her team of ten arrive at 5:30 AM and are skilled, reliable, and creative. They are the backbone of her operation. A full supply of small tasting spoons is at the ready, so that each dish is tasted for seasonings before it is served. The team takes pride in presenting meals with garnishes and in special dinnerware to elevate the meal experience. "We strive to carefully present and prepare meals so that the entire meal experience is enjoyable for the veterans," said Melissa. "Mealtime is so important from being together to sharing good food." During the COVID-19 pandemic it was particularly difficult to manage meal preparation to ensure the kitchen was its absolute safest. Paper products replaced dinnerware and strict sanitization methods were initiated. The residents suffered from not being together and isolated to their rooms or hallways for meals. Melissa's team looked for creative ways to make meals feel special. For example, they assembled individual appetizer baskets delivered to each resident. Residents have returned to the dining room and Melissa looks forward to bringing back interactive food experiences such as ice cream, taco, and chili bars. Presenting a well-balanced, diet that is delicious and served with care is a gift our veterans deserve.

THE ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT ANNA



Norman Hickman Turns 100 – Recognized by President Joe Biden

Norman Hickam Norman, resident of the Veterans' Home at Anna, had a special celebration with the presentation of a letter from President Joe Biden commemorating his birthday. Norman is the seventh child of nine children and is from Jonesboro, Illinois. He was with the Army Infantry stationed in Hawaii as a Staff Sergeant. His Army Infantry Unit was set to take over the islands, when it came to his Unit Commander's attention that Norman could read, type, and write shorthand. His Commander sent him to Fort Benning Georgia as a Second Lieutenant. When Norman returned home from the service, he carried on the family farm and owned his own timber business where he worked in the winter. Thank you for your service. Happy Birthday, Norman.



ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT CHICAGO



The Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago is located at 4250 N. Oak Park Avenue in Chicago.

In a historic moment for Illinois' veterans, on January 20th, 2021 the Veterans' Home at Chicago welcomed its first two veterans into Illinois' fifth Veterans' Home. In 2008, (then) Director Tammy Duckworth first envisioned a new veteran's home in Illinois. At that time, there were over 2,000 people on the waiting lists. The Chicago team is led by Administrator T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson who was instrumental in recruiting, hiring, and training staff as well as managing the final details of the home's construction and preparation for opening. The home offers space to 200 veterans and will employ up to 300 staff.



First Watch Logo: Recognizes the Chicago Team who was the first to establish the home and care for its first residents.



Kourtney Hopkins, Senior Program Manager and Women Veterans Coordinator, and Director Prince welcome residents to the Veterans' Home at Chicago.

CMS CELEBRATES Women's HISTORY MONTH

Women In Demand Webinar

Highlighting the achievements of women serving the State of Illinois in in-demand careers

Women In Demand Webinar
[Click here to register now](#)

Thursday, March 31, 2022
12:00 PM, CST

For more information, please visit www.cms.illinois.gov/cmswomenshistory

JOIN US

Women's History Month is about honoring women all over the world. It's about celebrating the huge strides women have made (and are making) in government, health care, social justice, science, math, technology, and all across the board. The Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) is teaming up with multiple State Agencies to host this special event in celebration of Women's History Month. You will hear talks from women from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences who will shed light on their personal and career journeys, strides they made to get to where they are today, and the "why" behind their public service careers. At this session, you will hear from:

- Women in Public Safety
- Women in Science
- Women in Healthcare
- Women in IT

Don't just find a job, find your career.

ILLINOIS

FEATURED SPEAKERS

 Sarah Kerley Chief Administrative Officer Illinois Department of Central Management Services	 Robin J. Woolley County Director Illinois State Police Division of Forensic Services	 T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson Senior Public Service Administrator Illinois Veterans' Home at Chicago	 Lora Rensing Bureau Chief of Construction Illinois Department of Transportation	 Dessa Gypalo Chief Data Officer Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology
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T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson Featured Panelist: T'Kira represented IDVA as part of Women's History Month and CMS' Women In Demand webinar featuring women in government, health care, social justice, science, math, and technology.



Chicago Home Social Services: Michelle Roberts, LCSW: Social Worker II and Suzanne Isenberg-Chhabra, Director of Social Services.



LaSalle Team representing for Hispanic Heritage Month: Luz Serratos, Kassandra Guerra (Green), Dennis Hogan (Blue), Danielle Wise

ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT LASALLE

The Illinois Veterans' Home at LaSalle (IVH-LaSalle) opened on December 12, 1990. With the 2008 construction of an 80-bed addition, IVH-LaSalle can house 190 veterans in both general skilled care and special needs unit providing care to residents suffering from dementia related health issues.

The IVH-LaSalle provides comprehensive, quality, skilled nursing care to the veterans who live there, with the goal to promote the highest possible quality of life for each individual member. Residents and their families are free to enjoy five secure, landscaped, outdoor courtyards for fresh air. A full range of rehabilitation services are provided to assist veterans in meeting their needs.

The Home has a complete staff of medical, nursing, social service, and activity personnel. Ancillary services such as physical, speech, and occupational therapies are available at the Home through contractual arrangements with specialists in the community. The Hines VA Medical Center is the USDVA hospital of jurisdiction for the IVH-LaSalle.



Interview with Jim Keeton, Rehabilitation Director for HealthPRO-Heritage

Jim Keeton, Rehabilitation Director for HealthPRO-Heritage and assigned to manage rehabilitation services at the Veterans' Home at LaSalle, is deeply connected to serving veterans. His father is a U.S. Vietnam War Army veteran who has a service-connected disability. "I take care of veterans how I would like my father to be cared for," said Jim in talking about his work at the LaSalle Home. The LaSalle, Chicago, and Manteno Veterans' Homes contract with HealthPRO-Heritage to deliver on-site rehabilitation services including physical, speech, and occupational therapies. The LaSalle team includes CNAs, physical, occupational, and speech therapists. Each has either an associates, master's, or doctorate in their field.

"Jim Keeton and his HealthPRO team serve our veterans with enthusiasm and encouragement," said LaSalle Home Administrator Brandi Melton. "I have seen residents' daily lives enhanced in small and big ways through therapy delivered by these compassionate and skilled professionals."

Jim describes his team as "phenomenal," and work toward one goal - gaining independence for the veteran for as long as possible. The LaSalle rehabilitation setting is inviting and well-equipped, and the ratio of therapists to veterans provides important one-on-one attention. The therapists also work with the home to plan everyday activities that support their therapies. At an ice cream social, a veteran can stand while scooping ice cream or on a gardening day, the veteran can plant flowers. These are simple, but important tasks for developing skills and confidence. Jim attributes the veterans' motivation and commitment to understanding that work and discipline produce results. His team also creates a welcoming, social environment with, activities, and relationship building. The "Star of the Month," program encourages veterans to work hard. They have built a community so that the veterans enjoy coming to therapy.

THE ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT MANTENO



Veterans' Home at Manteno: Residents and staff celebrate Cinco de Mayo

The Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno (IVH-M) celebrated its 32nd year of service in April and continues to serve many northern and central Illinois veterans. The IVH-M is located on 122-acre campus 60 miles south of Chicago. Approximately 143 acres of additional property is farmed with the proceeds of that lease being placed in the Manteno Home Fund. The Home provides a comfortable residence for the veterans in a peaceful rural setting and has a post office, library, bank, beauty/barber shop, and commissary which services up to 294 residents. The campus features a 1 ½ acre man-made pond that is stocked and landscaped, with a pavilion where veterans can enjoy the outdoors and "catch- and-release" fishing.

The IVH-M has a complete in-house medical staff to provide the full-range of professional nursing care for veterans. Residents who may require acute hospital services such as surgery, advanced diagnostic work-ups, or other specialized treatments receive this care at the USDVA Medical Center at Hines, Illinois. Two community hospitals in Kankakee, IL also provide acute and emergency care. Skilled, professional staff members are assisted by a large contingent of dedicated volunteers from local veterans and civic organizations. Weekly religious services of all faiths are held in the facility chapel. The Activities and Volunteer Services Departments provide residents with a variety of social and recreational activities.

Warming up Our Veterans: The Manteno Veterans' home welcomed a delivery of blankets handmade by students from Prairieview Middle School in Tinley Park. Elizabeth Barth, an eighth grader, founded "Warming Up our Veterans" and recruited classmates to join the effort. For three months throughout the fall, students gathered each day to select fabric and make the blankets. Elizabeth and her family will delivered the blankets to the Manteno Veterans' Home during a special coffee and cookie gathering.



Manteno Memorial Wall Expansion

The Manteno Memorial Wall Expands progress and will be completed this year. Since 1987, 4,094 veterans have called the Veterans' Home at Manteno their home. Beginning with the first resident Robert Bootz, the home has been a retreat for veterans from across Illinois. To honor each resident, a Memorial Wall etched with the name of each resident was erected in 2009. In 2021, with all residents honored, the original structure was complete leading to an expansion project projected to be completed later this year. The Memorial Wall, along the accessible path to Lake Lyle, is enjoyed by residents and visitors.



THE ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT QUINCY

In 1886, the 34th Illinois General Assembly passed legislation to establish a soldiers' and sailors' home for disabled Illinois veterans of the Mexican and Civil Wars. On June 1, 1886 Governor Richard Oglesby, selected Quincy as the site of the new home. On October 19, 1886, the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailor's Home was formally dedicated. In June 1973, the name was changed to the Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy (IVH-Quincy).

The IVH-Quincy is the largest and oldest veterans' home of the five in Illinois and one of the larger and older veterans' homes in the country. Today, more than 250 residents call the facility home and represent most of the 102 counties in Illinois. The IVH-Quincy provides domiciliary and skilled nursing care to Illinois veterans, their spouses, and widows/widowers.

The Quincy Home offers levels of healthcare ranging from 80 domiciliary beds to skilled nursing care for up to 386 veterans, with units for those Veterans who have special needs. Full-time physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Veteran Nursing Assistants-Certified (CNAs) provide 24-hour a day, 7-days a week care. In addition to the extensive medical department, the Home has social services, activities, dietary, laundry, housekeeping, security, and maintenance departments.

The USDVA Medical Center at Iowa City is the hospital of jurisdiction for the IVH-Quincy.

Veterans' Home At Quincy Receives Nearly \$200 Million Federal Grant

The Veterans' Home at Quincy is the recipient of a final grant of \$194,762,750 from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for enhancements to the Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy. The allocation will be used for campus reconstruction and replacement of the current veterans' home with a 210-bed skilled care facility. Additionally, 80 independent living domiciliary rooms will be created. This upgrade will modernize the campus and provide a cost effective, state-of-the-art facility with single occupancy rooms and a more intimate setting for Illinois' veterans needing skilled nursing care.



Meet Betty Bradshaw – Quincy Veterans' Home Resident

Betty Bradshaw moved to the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy in August 2017 from her hometown of Griggsville, Illinois. While a resident, she has immersed herself in all that Quincy has to offer. She was looking forward to celebrating her 95th birthday in April of this year. However, just one month shy her of her birthday, she began to have leg and back pain so severe that she struggled to get out of bed, couldn't walk very far and ultimately, with a decrease in mobility, her social activities began to decrease. She often used a cane and a walker for long distances but now felt the need to use it more frequently.

Many thanks to her nurse, Mary Day, and Nurse Practitioner, Heidi Ludwig, they offered several options to help Betty get back on her feet. With pain management, regular exercise, and an order for physical therapy, Betty is now pain free and walking again without a cane or walker.

THE ILLINOIS VETERANS' HOME AT QUINCY



40 residents of the Veterans' Home at Quincy participated in the seventh annual Fishing for Freedom event held on June 4th. Fishing for Freedom -Quincy is a no-entry fee bass, catfish, and crappie tournament that pairs active military and veterans with boaters, fishermen, fishing guides, and local outdoorsmen for a fun day of fishing on local fisheries. Volunteers joined the veterans for a weekend long event featuring fishing tournaments, lunch and awards ceremony, and a Heroes Banquet.



Veterans' Home at Quincy's Social Worker Team



Jackie DeDeaux, Jauna Byrd and Daylin Goehl -Quincy



Rick Gengenbacher – Quincy's New Adjutant

Meet Rick Gengenbacher, the new Adjutant at the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy, has been part of the Illinois Veterans' Home for over 32 years. Rick has served as the public information officer where he has coordinated several significant public events for the Quincy community including veteran celebrations and memorials. He was also its liaison with media outlets. Not only does Rick bring a great deal of knowledge of IVHQ history, but also pleasant interpersonal skills, a customer service focus, and has a heart for veterans. Mr. Gengenbacher brings a level of enrichment to the community and this veteran organization that beautifully illustrates our mission vision values to those we serve.

THE PRINCE HOME AT MANTENO



Located on the grounds of the Manteno Veterans' Home, the Prince Home for homeless and disabled veterans is a separate program with a dedicated staff and

program director. The Prince Home opened in 2007 to provide permanent supportive housing for men and women veterans in its 15-bed facility.

The Prince Home staff provides each resident with the skills needed for successful independent living. The Home provides a structured, safe, and caring environment, which instills a sense of dignity, belonging, and achievement, enhancing the opportunity to succeed. The Prince Home vision is for residents to leave the program with the confidence to achieve full-time employment, independent housing, and sobriety.

The Prince Home is not a shelter used to temporarily house veterans; it is a home where veterans can rebuild their lives. To reside in the Prince Home, residents must participate in the entire scope of the curriculum, programs, and activities. As of June 2021, the Prince Home has served 212 residents since its opening.

The Home's leadership advocates for homeless veterans statewide through networks with county and city governments, various state agencies, religious institutions, private and community organizations, the USDVA, and state-wide veterans' organizations.

In FY 22, the Prince Home has had the following events:

- Several organizations have hosted luncheons and dinners throughout the year. The organizations have had the food delivered to the residents at the Prince Building although they were not able to enter the premises. The residents have appreciated them, knowing that someone was thinking of them through these difficult times.
- The Chas J. & Margaret D. Nash Trust & Arcadia Palace Lodge # 765 donated \$ 9,000.
- This past Christmas, Adopt-A-Soldier donated three brand new desk top computers along with three executive chairs for the common area. The computers were for the use of all residents.

Angela Simmons: Shifting Roles to Senior Home Administrator



The Senior Home Administrator (SHA) supervises leadership and operations of all five Veterans' Homes and the Prince Home, ensuring compliance with federal and state standards of long-term care and operations. The SHA also develops Department-wide policies for the homes and serves as a key subject-matter expert for Department leadership.

Angela Simmons was promoted to this position in November 2021. She joined IDVA in 2013 as the Nursing Home Administrator for the Veterans' Home at Anna before accepting the position of IDVA Senior Home Administrator, leading the team of administrators running Illinois' five nursing homes. Angie's list of achievements is noteworthy. In 2015, she won the Illinois "Pioneering Culture Change Champion of the Year" award and in 2020, was elected to the Illinois Nursing Home Administrator Board of Directors. Angie is dedicated to changing the culture of long-term care into more of a homelike "resident centered" environment. She was a guest lecturer to a statewide audience on best practices for nursing homes against COVID-19. Angie's advice to her team, "leave yesterday's problems behind. Don't bring yesterday's problems with you today because you just doubled your problems." Angie was raised in Southern Illinois and is the proud daughter of a Vietnam veteran. She graduated from Nursing School at Shawnee Community College in 1997 and earned her bachelor's degree at Mid-Continent University. She is committed to service in the community and volunteers much of her personal time supporting the Special Olympics.

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is an important day of remembrance for veterans throughout Illinois. Director Prince and IDVA team members attended events, ceremonies, and programs to honor those who have been lost and to support communities throughout the state.



Director Prince joined the community of Our Lady of Guadalupe to recognize 12 young Latino men from this parish who lost their lives in the Vietnam War. The American Legion Post 1238 and Chicago Southeast Side Vietnam Veterans of America were among the many people joining this solemn ceremony. For 52 years, this community, including family and friends, have gathered to remember.

Memorial Day at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery – the first ceremony held in two years. Director Prince walked the sacred grounds, reading the names of men and women and reflecting on their sacrifice. The program included music interludes, speeches by “President” Abraham Lincoln and “First Lady” Mary Todd, essays written by students, raising of the flag, wreath laying, and an impressive fly over that marveled the sizeable crowd. Director Prince visited with veterans following the ceremony. A beautiful day to honor those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom.



IDVA Senior Program Policy Advisor Crystal Womack joined the Williamsville Veterans Group, Boy Scout Troop 330 (Sherman, IL), and Members of the Village of Williamsville to place American flags on the grave sites of veterans at the Walnut Hill & Wolf Creek Cemeteries.

Kourtney Hopkins, IDVA’s Women Veterans Coordinator, joined the Kankakee County Veterans Council and local veteran organizations at the Kankakee Memorial Gardens and the Kankakee Courthouse where she had the honor of presenting the Memorial Day message.



Director Prince visits with veterans, staff and volunteers at the Manteno Veterans’ Home on Memorial Day 2022.

VETERANS DAY

While every day is veterans day at IDVA, on November 11th each year, team IDVA disperses around the state to attend events, parades, programs, and ceremonies to support veterans and to demonstrate that IDVA stands by them. It is also an opportunity to educate veterans about the many services IDVA is poised to provide them.



Director Terry Prince participated in the Cook County Veterans Day Ceremony with Deeana Love (Maj. Ret.), Director of Veterans Affairs, Bureau of Administration, Cook County



Team IDVA participate in the Springfield Veterans Day Parade



Veterans Day at the Veterans' Home at LaSalle



Veterans Day at the Veterans' Home at Anna



Director Prince participated in the Lake County Veterans Memorial Dedication at the Waukegan Airport.

PARTNERSHIPS

Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council

The Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council (IVAC) was established effective July 1, 2004, by Public Act 093-0779. In accordance with the Act, council members include:

- Four members of the General Assembly, appointed one each by the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, preferably from a legislative or representative district in which a state-operated veterans' home is located.
- Six veterans appointed by the Director of Veterans' Affairs.
- One veteran appointed by the commander or president of each Veteran Service Organization that is chartered by the federal government and by the State of Illinois and that elects to appoint an IVAC member.

Public Act 96-1266 increased the council Membership to include:

- One person appointed by the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard,
- One person appointed by the Illinois Attorney General
- One person appointed by the Illinois Secretary of State
- One person appointed by the Director of the Illinois Department of Employment Security
- One person appointed by each military family organization that is chartered by the federal government.

In addition, no member of the council shall be an employee or representative of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Members of the Council serve without compensation or reimbursement. The Council meets quarterly as required and is available to meet at the call of the Chair or at the call of the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Governor. The Department provides meeting space and clerical and administrative support services for the Council.

The Council is empowered to:

- Advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs with respect to the fulfillment of its statutory duties.
- Review and study the issues and concerns that are most significant to Illinois veterans and advise the Department on those issues and concerns.
- Receive a report from the Director of Veterans' Affairs or the Director's designee at each meeting with respect to the general activities of the Department.
- Report to the Governor and the General Assembly annually describing the issues addressed and the actions taken by the council during the year as well as any recommendations for future action

IDVA partners with many veteran-centered organizations around the state to harness their collective knowledge and resources to serve veterans better together.

PARTNERSHIPS



K9 for Veterans Dog Presentation

Director Terry Prince had the honor of presenting U.S. Army veteran Dan Valsques with his service dog Rex as part of the K9s for Veterans Dedication ceremony. K9s for Veterans helps veterans manage PTSD by pairing them with a trained service dog. Their bond is lifesaving! Don't forget to keep in touch with the veterans in your life. A simple call is a gesture that can brighten an otherwise difficult day.

Illinois Joining Forces Annual Summit brought advocates for veterans to share their ideas and solutions for serving veterans across Illinois. IDVA is grateful for this partnership. Director Terry Prince addressed the collaborative efforts of veteran advocates and Women Veterans Coordinator Kourtney Hopkins co-moderated the women veterans break out session.



Director Prince addresses the **Disabled American Veterans Annual Conference** in Springfield.



DIRECT FEDERAL SPENDING

