



Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County Update

Superintendent Andrew Tangen

February 2, 2021

Lake County's Mission

Deliver exceptional, financially and environmentally responsive/responsible services that promote a safe, affordable, healthy, and resilient community.



Overview



- **Primary functions and tasks**
 - **Financial Assistance**
 - **Veterans Advocacy**
 - **Peer Support and Job Counseling**
 - **Partnering with other Organizations and Agencies**
- **Staffing**
 - **Currently Comprised of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, one (1) Senior Veterans Service Officer, three (3) Veteran Service Officers, and one (1) Administrative Assistant**
- **Total departmental budget for FY20**
 - **\$651,124**
- **Total departmental budget for FY21**
 - **\$699,135**



Overview



- **The Mission of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Lake County:**
 - *To promote the welfare of honorably discharged Veterans of military service and their families through maximizing all possible benefits through effective and dynamic advocacy and by serving as a central service office for all Veterans residing in the County of Lake.*
- **This Mission is met by strict adherence to:**
 - **The Military Veterans Assistance Act (330 ILCS 45/)**
 - **The Illinois Public Aid Code (305 ILCS 5/)**
 - **Illinois Department of Human Services Regulations**
 - **Title 38 of the USC**
 - **Title 38 of the CFR**
 - **Case Law**



Previous 12 Months



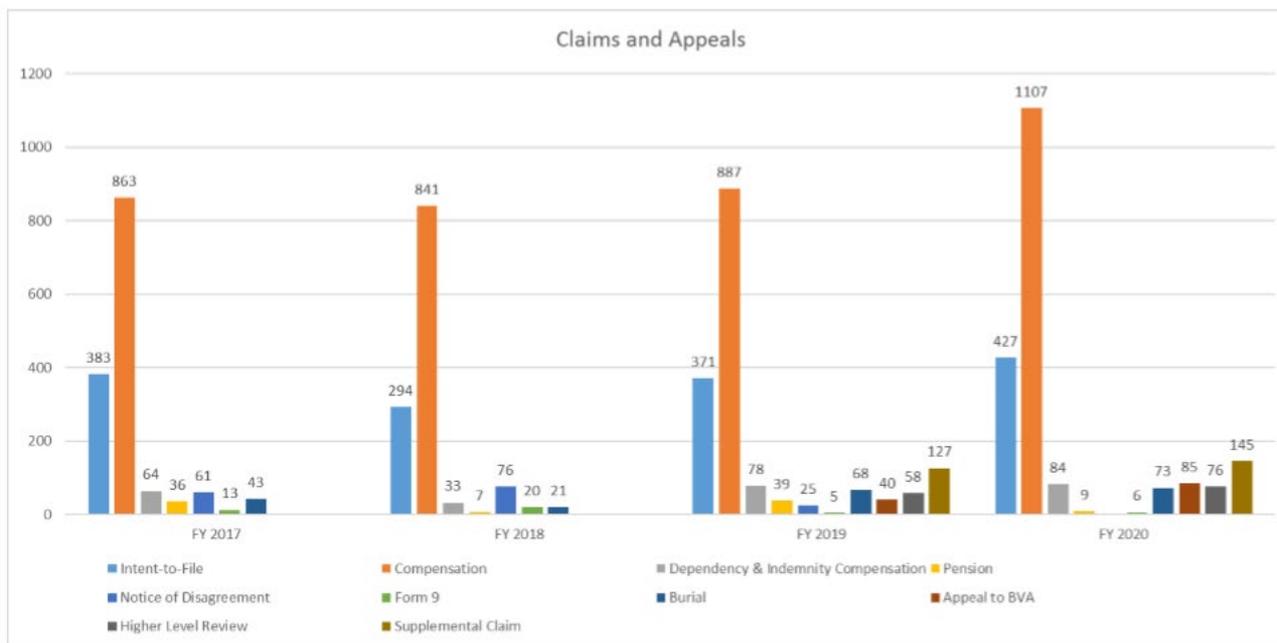
- **FY2020 saw a Seventy-Seven (77) percent increase over FY2019 in approved financial assistance requests, including:**
 - **Providing over 1000 cumulative nights of emergency shelter to Veterans and their Families who had either lost housing or were displaced due to the Pandemic, a Seventy-Four (74) percent increase over FY2019**
 - **Massive increases in requests for assistance in rental/mortgage, utilities, and food**
- **Based on the trendlines observed, Lake County is no longer functional zero for Veterans Homelessness**
 - **Fifty-Eight (58) known families currently without secure housing**
- **FY2021 will bring an increased need for mental health and other services, for both Veterans and their families**



Previous 12 Months



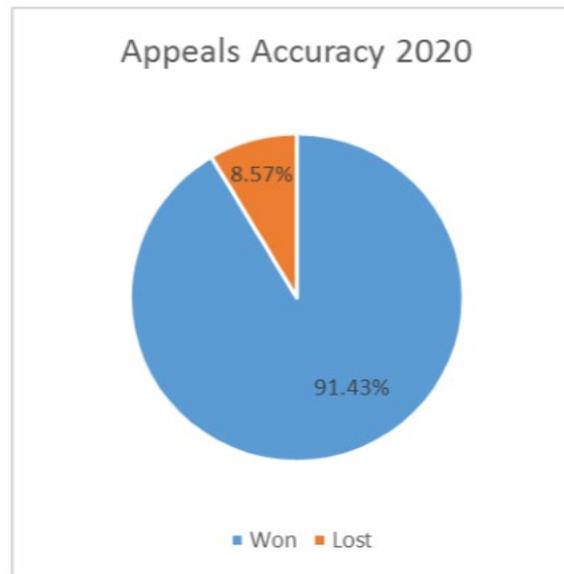
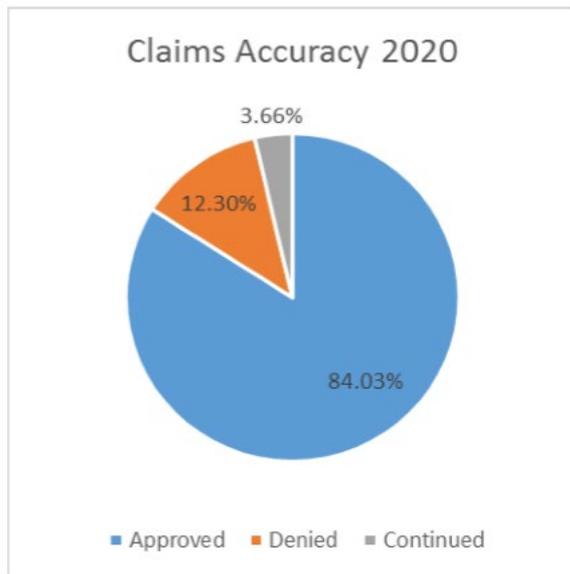
- **Fiscal Year 2020, saw a drastic increase in request for advocacy assistance over previous Fiscal Years**
 - **Advocacy work in front of the US Department of Veterans Affairs showed the largest increase**





Previous 12 Months

- **Even with the drastic increase in claims, appeals, and other benefit applications filed, the Commission still saw an effective rate 85 percent of claims filed and a 91 percent effective rate of appeals. This compares to FY 2019 of 81.06 percent claims filed, 86 percent appeals.**

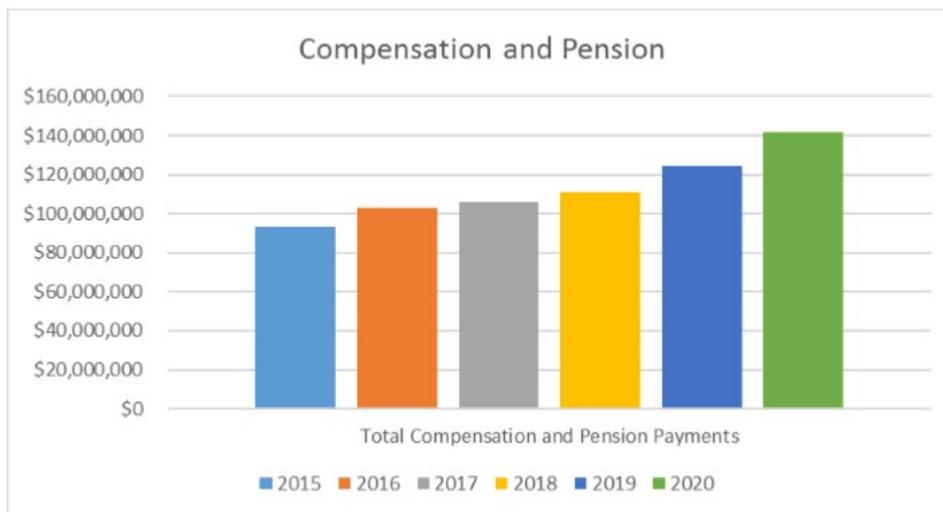




Previous 12 Months



- **Total VA Compensation and Pensions Payments for FY2020 for Lake County is expected to be approximately \$141,654,215.47**
 - **This represents a return to the community of \$223.21 for every dollar of Property Tax Revenue received by the Commission**



- **Further, when the economic theory of the Multiplier Effect is applied to this sum, this amount has a cumulative effect on the economy of Lake County of \$708,271,077.35**



Previous 12 Months



- **The Commission also joined the National Organization of Veterans Advocates in *National Organization of Veterans' Advocates, Inc., et al. v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs*, No. 20-1321 at the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and *Stop NorthPoint, LLC, et al. v. City of Joliet, et al.***
 - ***NOVA v. Wilkie* focused on two of the provisions of the Adjudication Procedures Manual interpretation of Knee Joint Stability and Knee Replacements.**
 - **The Court ruled in favor of NOVA, overruling *the DAV v. VA and Gray v. VA*, and invalidated and amended Federal Circuit Rule 15(f)**
- ***NorthPoint* revolves around the prevention of the proposed NorthPoint Development Industrial Park adjacent to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery**



Next 12 Months



- **Continue the partnerships with Federal and State Senators and Legislators in accordance with the VACLC and IACVAC legislative initiatives**
- **Increase reach to Veterans and their families through outreach, media engagement, and social media**
- **Continue to improve on staff efficiencies and competencies in the advocacy realm, to include having VSOs and other staff who qualify to begin training as Certified Veterans Advocates, the highest qualification a VSO can achieve**
- **Work with partners and other agencies to combat the homeless epidemic and mental health crisis facing the Veterans Community and their families**



Questions