

MVAA 2022 Annual Report

10 Years of Serving Veterans





◀ MVA Director Zaneta Adams reminds veterans and their families that they can get connected to resources and benefits by calling MVA at 1-800-MICH-VET.

MARKING A DECADE OF VETERAN SERVICE

As we march into 2023 – and celebrate 10 years of service to veteran families – we close the books on 2022. By just about every measure, it was our best year yet.

With unwavering support from Gov. Whitmer’s administration and the Legislature, the MVA reached new heights in connecting veterans to the benefits and resources they earned for their service.

In fiscal year 2022, we handled 28,444 veteran cases through our Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (1-800-MICH-VET), the most ever for a single year. Our expert technicians averaged a whopping 2,370 cases a month while achieving a “highly satisfied” rate of 91.5% from our veterans.

In FY22, the MVRSC also made a single-year record 2,757 referrals to accredited Veteran Service Officers, who assist our veterans in filing claims for VA benefits.

On the grants front, the MVA administered nearly \$13 million in grant funding to organizations and county offices that serve veterans. That included

\$10.9 million in state-appropriated grant funding — a nearly \$4 million increase over FY21 thanks to Gov. Whitmer and bipartisan legislative support of our veterans.

As COVID restrictions eased further in 2022, we amplified our direct outreach to veteran and veteran stakeholders across the state.

In September 2022, we hosted our second annual conferences for both veteran employment and higher education. Some 200 employers and educators gathered in Grand Rapids to discuss ways to improve services to veteran families.

Our inaugural Women Veterans Conference attracted 144 women veterans to downtown Lansing to learn about advocacy and resources, make new connections and share their stories. The June conference reinforced our commitment to serving veterans of all backgrounds and eras.

In another first, we brought together dozens of veteran stakeholders in May for the Michigan Veterans Leadership Summit. The Lansing event broke down silos to focus on partnerships and integrative ways we can help serve veterans together.

Speaking of partnerships, in July the MVAA entered into an agreement with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) to provide free legal representation to Michigan veterans and their families in appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

We also continued addressing the most critical issue

of all: veteran suicide, and the factors behind it. We're increasing resources and direct engagement with veterans, as well as with business and organizations so they can help us reach more veterans and get them connected to benefits. These efforts are bolstered by a \$1.2 million investment from the state and \$750,000 a year for up to three years from the VA.

Nothing is more important than removing the barriers that can lead veterans to crisis, whether that's housing, mental health, employment or other challenges. At the MVAA, we've attacked these issues head-on during our first decade and will continue to attack them in the years to come. Our veteran families deserve nothing less.

Finally, I'd like to welcome the new director of the MVAA, Adam Hollier, a former state senator and captain in the Army Reserves. I am stepping down Dec. 31 after three and a half years at the helm of the agency. We've accomplished so much together to expand outreach and improve services for Michigan veterans, and I am hopeful that Director Hollier and the MVAA will continue that unyielding advocacy for the men and women who have served our state and nation.

It has been an honor to serve my fellow veterans.



Zaneta Adams
MVAA Director, 2019–2022

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) was created by executive order 10 years ago — on Jan. 18, 2013 — to serve as the state’s central coordinating agency for veterans and their families.

As part of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), the MVAA provides support, care, advocacy and service to veterans of all eras and backgrounds. The MVAA is responsible for operation of the Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center, a 24/7/365 call center (1-800-MICH-VET) in partnership with Michigan 211; the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund, which provides short-term emergency relief to eligible veterans; and the state’s grant to chartered veterans service organizations and the Michigan Association of County Veterans Counselors.

The MVAA assists veterans and their families by connecting them to the federal and state resources and benefits they earned for their service. The agency does this by working with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), various state departments and agencies, and hundreds of community-based veteran programs to create a no-wrong-door access to benefits and services.

The MVAA embraces the belief that those who serve our state and nation in the armed forces are considered members for life. This means our commitment to these brave men and women start the day they take their oath, providing them with

comprehensive support after their service, ensuring their long-term care needs are met with dignity and their loved ones are supported in their time of need. Our goal is to reach and serve all Michigan veterans, a strategic approach that calls for connecting with underserved veteran populations including women veterans, tribal veterans and incarcerated veterans.

Through our comprehensive approach, we work to remove the barriers veterans face in employment, education, health care and quality of life, making Michigan a great place for veterans and their families to call home.

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency FY22 Expenditures

At the MVAA, we pride ourselves on being good stewards of taxpayer money and transparent in how we spend it.

Our state appropriated budget in FY22 was \$7.4 million, of which about \$2.5 million went for partnerships, grant opportunities and our executive, budget and data teams. All of these efforts were focused directly on our mission of serving Michigan’s veteran families. The bulk of the budget — nearly \$4.9 million — was spent on veteran customer service, marketing and direct outreach and service provision to veterans. This includes:

- **Customer service** — \$877,098. Our Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (1-800-MICH-VET) operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in conjunction with Michigan 211. Center technicians handled a record 28,444 veteran cases in FY22, an average of 2,370 a month.

- **Marketing and communications** — \$1,630,819. Determined to reach every veteran in the state, we publicized our services throughout Michigan with direct marketing, advertising, print and digital media, public events and other communications in FY22. These efforts included our weekly veteran newsletter and branded messaging sent to tens of thousands of transitioning service members and those identifying as veterans on their driver's licenses.
- **Veterans Service Officers** — \$604,526. Our VSOs submitted nearly 650 applications for veterans' benefits, realizing more than \$14.5 million in recoveries for veterans and their families.
- **Strategic Outreach** — \$1,796,666. Our targeted outreach to veterans and veteran-centric organizations focused on breaking down the barriers veterans face in education, employment, health care and quality of life. This included continuing our Community Outreach and Regional Engagement (CORE) Initiative in FY22, which provides tailored outreach to veterans on a regional basis.

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund FY22 Expenditures

FY22 expenditures totaled \$2,840,394, of which \$1,512,268 went to emergency grants for eligible veterans and their families including, for the first time, peacetime-era veterans who are 65 and older. These grants assisted 1,185 veterans and dependents. Another estimated 1,200 veterans and dependents received benefits from the \$308,000 that was given to organizations providing food assistance and entrepreneurial training for veteran families. Remaining expenditures went toward program and administrative costs on the state and county levels.



▲ Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (MVRSC) manager John Stauffer (left) shakes hands with veteran Michael Bowen at the Oakland County Veterans Resource Fair in Holly.

MICHIGAN VETERAN RESOURCE SERVICE CENTER: 140,000 CASES AND COUNTING

What started nearly 10 years ago as an innovative, 24-hour-a-day veteran hotline has become the bustling nerve center of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency.

The Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (MVRSC) — a team of expert technicians who monitor the 1-800-MICH-VET hotline — has served more than 140,000 veterans and dependents since the center was established in 2014.

In fiscal year 2022, the MVRSC handled 28,444 cases, a yearly record. That's an average of 2,370

cases a month. Not only that, but 91.5% of the veterans who used the MVRSC in FY22 reported they were highly satisfied, according to call center surveys.

The MVRSC started as the first statewide call center in the nation that serves veteran families 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. MVRSC technicians take calls from 6 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, with trained agents from Michigan 211 taking calls after hours and on weekends.

In 2016, the call center won an Abraham Lincoln

Testimonials from MVRSC Callers:

“Because of [MVRSC technician] Ron Fink, my father-in-law Richard E. Kowalski was able to have honors at his funeral. We cannot thank Ron enough for his thoroughness and swiftness to get us the DD214 paperwork so that we could present it to the funeral home.”

— Tina Kowalski, daughter of Army veteran

“With the help I received, I was able to give my mother the funeral she deserved. I was so grateful.”

— Julie Temper, daughter of Navy veteran

“Everybody has been very accommodating and helpful. This has really calmed my nerves during the retirement/transition process.”

— John King, Army veteran

Pillar of Excellence Award from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for its innovative and comprehensive service.

In addition to helping veterans locate their DD214 discharge papers, MVRSC technicians connect them to myriad benefits and resources. This includes emergency assistance, education, employment, health care and quality of life benefits. Veterans can also be referred to an accredited Veteran Service Officer to help them file claims for VA benefits.

MVRSC technician Amie Barrett helps a veteran who called 1-800-MICH-VET. ▶



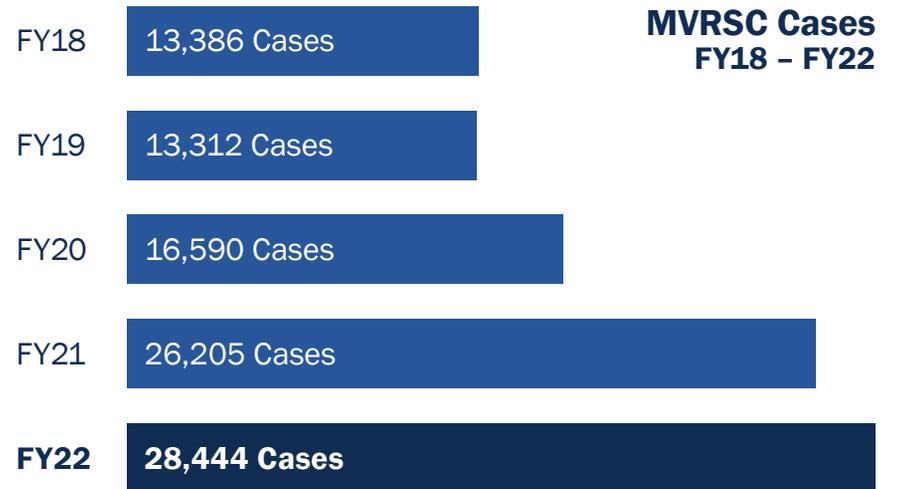
91.5%
of callers
were **highly**
satisfied
in FY22

“I found it wonderful to talk with someone who really understands the different generations of vets and how they look at technology and the best way to manage their fears.”

— Jack Rice, Air Force veteran

“[Technician Laurie Nevin] was a delight to work with. She was polite, professional and made me feel both comfortable and appreciated.”

— Mark Comstock, son of Marine veteran



A LOOK BACK AT 2022



▼ MVA A Director Zaneta Adams speaks to women veterans at the inaugural MVA A Women Veterans Conference.

Even though we've been serving veterans for 10 years, 2022 was in many ways a year of firsts for the MVA A. We held our first Women Veterans Conference and Veterans Leadership Summit — two highly successful events — as well as set records for veteran engagement and established first-time partnerships and initiatives designed to help veterans thrive. Here are a just a few of our successes from 2022:

- MVA A partnered with the VA in October 2021 and October 2022 to serve 1,000+ Michigan veterans through the Veterans Experience Action Centers (VEAC). Veterans were connected to disability benefits, health care, housing, peer-to-peer networks such as MVA A's Buddy to Buddy program and other services. Some 90% of survey respondents said they felt respected and valued.

- MVAA partnered with the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) to offer free legal representation for Michigan veterans and their families in appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. NVLSP is a national nonprofit that works to ensure the government delivers to America's 22 million veterans and active-duty personnel the benefits to which they are entitled because of disabilities resulting from their military service.
- MVAA helped get the ashes of a decorated Vietnam veteran home to where they belong. In early 2022, the remains of Master Sgt. Enrique Leonardo Castro were found in a storage unit in Cadillac. When James Weir won the unit at auction, he contacted Arlington National Cemetery but was told a family member must apply. Unable to find living relatives, he contacted his state representative, who reached out to MVAA Director Zaneta Adams. Adams worked with the VA and Michigan National Guard to locate next of kin for Castro in Texas, who shared that the ashes found in storage were only a portion of his remains; the rest were with the family. Castro was honored at Dearborn's Memorial Day parade and received military honors in Texas. His remains were interred at Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio.



▲ (Top photo, left to right) MVAA Deputy Director Robert Near, Maj. Gen. Paul D. Rogers and MVAA Director Zaneta Adams present Ryan Sanderson with the Community Outreach and Regional Engagement Award at the second annual Michigan Military & Veterans Gala. (Bottom photo) The 126th Army Rock Band performs at the gala, which attracted more than 600 people.

MVAA STEPS UP ATTACK ON VETERAN SUICIDE

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency strengthened its veteran suicide prevention efforts in FY22 with a \$1.2 million investment from the Whitmer administration and a grant of \$750,000 per year for up to three years from the VA.

This suicide prevention funding – which could total \$3.45 million – will focus on improving the health and well-being of Michigan’s 550,000-plus veterans so they can thrive and avoid the crises that can lead to suicidal ideation.



Veteran suicide remains a persistent problem. According to the latest available data from the VA, 882 Michigan veterans died by suicide from 2016-20, an average of 176 suicides annually over five years.

The issues that can start a veteran spiraling toward crisis include housing and employment challenges, substance abuse and lack of mental health supports. That’s why the MVAA considers everything it does through the lens of suicide prevention. A critical first step is getting our former service members to identify as veterans and understand the myriad benefits and resources that are available to them.

Under Gov. Whitmer, Michigan is already addressing veteran suicide through the Governor’s Challenge to

Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families. This highly collaborative effort includes more than 50 partner organizations and is led by MVAA Director Zaneta Adams. With the \$1.2 million investment, the MVAA will expand its **Michigan Veteran Connector** initiative that enlists businesses and organizations in veteran suicide prevention. By simply asking customers if they served in the military and, if so, referring them to the MVAA’s 1-800-MICH-VET hotline, these Veteran Connectors can ultimately help veterans get linked to the resources they need to thrive.

With the VA funding, which comes from the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, the MVAA will hire two community health analysts to work directly with veterans to address the issues that can ultimately tie into suicide. The analysts will be cross trained through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services’ Walking with Warriors program and work side by side with staff at the MVAA’s Michigan Resource Service Center and the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund.

“Effective veteran suicide prevention strategy involves a holistic approach,” Director Adams said. “We know that connection to health care and other resources reduces suicides for veterans, so when we help a veteran with housing needs or emergency grant assistance, we are part of the prevention. But we need help from everyone. From barbershops to banks to schools to hospitals to churches, we should all take part in preventing suicides among veterans.”

If you’re a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and press 1; text 838255; or chat online at www.veteranscrisisline.net.

- In FY22, MVAA's Veteran Service Officers submitted 647 applications for veterans' benefits and realized \$14,568,263 in recoveries for Michigan veterans and their families. MVAA also collaborated with National Veteran Service Organizations (NVSOs) to file many more applications and realize more recoveries for Michigan veterans. Through the Statewide Veteran Service Provision Grant (SVSPG), facilitated by the MVAA, NVSOs provided 90,224 hours of service provision, ensuring Michigan veterans and family members get help connecting to all benefits.
- The MVAA had a historical year on social media. In 2022, we hit a milestone on Facebook, passing 10,000 followers. With the support and engagement of our followers, we're able to better serve Michigan's veteran population with the latest information on upcoming events, trainings, news, resources and more. MVAA also saw significant gains on other social platforms, with more than 212,000 impressions on Twitter and nearly 2,000 page views on LinkedIn.
- MVAA leaders were invited to the White House Oct. 12 to brief the Biden administration on Michigan's successful efforts to serve veteran families. Director Zaneta Adams and Erika Hoover, women veterans and special populations coordinator, traveled to Washington, D.C., along with other state and local officials as part of a Communities in Action — Building a Better Michigan event. The group was greeted by Vice President Kamala Harris before participating in round table discussions with cabinet members including Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, former Michigan governor.



▲ (Top photo) MVAA Deputy Director Robert Near talks with vendors at MVAA's Women Veterans Conference. (Bottom photo) Vice President Kamala Harris greets a Michigan delegation to the White House on Oct. 12 including MVAA Director Zaneta Adams (seated, third from right). Photo courtesy of the White House.



- The MVA held its first-ever Michigan Veterans Leadership Summit May 11 in East Lansing, bringing together dozens of stakeholders with a goal of breaking down silos and putting aside egos to improve veterans’ services. Keynote speaker Dave Woodruff of the Bob Woodruff Foundation summed up the theme of the conference: “We’re focused 100% on collaboration and not competition,” he said. “We have found that the power working together is so much more effective than looking inwardly and working toward your own goals.”
- MVA’s Veteran-Friendly Employers (VFE) program, which helps companies and organizations recruit, hire and retain veterans, grew to 542 employers from 402 employers the year before — a 35% increase. That includes 23 prestigious Gold-level VFEs, up from 14 the year prior. VFEs are certified as Bronze, Silver or Gold depending on the level of veteran hiring and support.
- The State of Michigan veterans’ preference program was expanded to benefit current state employees as well as military retirees and active-duty service members looking to join the state’s ranks. Civil Service approved rule changes to allow state employees to use veterans’ preference for promotional postings, active-duty service members to apply for veterans’ preference prior to discharge and military retirees to apply for the preference program. In addition, multiple forms of veterans’ preference can now be used for a single state job posting. Previously, veterans’ preference was limited to new state hires and only one form could be used per selection process. The program is open to veterans and eligible spouses.

▲ **(Top photo)** Tim Poxson of American Legion Department of Michigan Post 238 talks with speaker Dave Woodruff (right) after his keynote at the Michigan Veterans Leadership Summit. **(Bottom photo)** A panel of employers take the stage at the 2022 Veteran-Friendly Employment Conference. (From left) Tom McMahon and Jeremiah Hernandez of Meijer; Anthony Scaturro of Haworth; Corey Kelly of Rocket Companies; and Katelyn Hammond of Michigan State Police. Also participating was Tim Merkle of Steelcase.

MVAA AWARDS NEARLY \$13 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR VETERAN SUPPORT

The MVAA administered \$12.7 million in grant funding to various stakeholders serving veterans and their families in fiscal year 2022 – a \$4 million increase in grant funding from FY21.

The funding came from three grants and included \$10.9 million from state appropriations and \$1.8 million from the Michigan Economic Development (MEDC). Here's a breakdown:

County Veteran Service Fund Grant (CVSF): The MVAA administered \$6.6 million in state-appropriated CVSF grant funding to 62 county veteran service offices – the highest funding amount since the CVSF was created in FY19. Grant-funded veteran services ranged from food assistance to transportation to dental services. The MEDC provided another \$900,000 that was distributed across 43 counties for service provision.

Statewide Veteran Service Provision Grant (SVSPG): This state-appropriated grant funding of \$4.25 million was awarded to the Michigan Veterans Coalition, which is comprised of Veteran Service Organizations, for direct veteran service provision. The MEDC provided another \$900,000.

Michigan Veteran Service Organizations Networking Grant (MiVSONG): Through MiVSONG state-appropriated funding, \$12,000 was awarded to Michigan Community Action Teams to be used for professional networking opportunities for veteran service providers and advocates.

- Eligible military veterans seeking a commercial driver's license (CDL) in Michigan no longer are required to take the driving skills test thanks an "Even Exchange" law passed in FY22. The Secretary of State can now waive the driving test for veterans who have the requisite experience through specific Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) in the past year. This applies to veterans trained to drive military fifth-wheel truck tractors and semitrailers, "pintle hook" truck-trailer combinations and heavy single vehicles. Since Michigan already waives the knowledge skills portion of the CDL, it became one of fewer than 20 states to waive both tests for eligible veterans.
- MVAA's Veteran Friendly Schools program certified 63 colleges, universities and trade schools for the 2022-2023 program year, with many schools increasing in their rating. Of the 63 schools, three increased from Bronze to Silver certification, four increased from Silver to Gold, and the program brought in one new school, Andrews University, which was certified at the Gold level.
- Director Zaneta Adams was elected junior vice president of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA), one of the largest service providers for veterans in the nation. As junior VP, Adams is third in command at NASDVA and chairs the legislative committee, meaning she plays a vital role in determining what veteran-specific issues NASDVA will present before Congress. Adams is the first state veterans director from Michigan to serve as an elected official for NASDVA since 1975-76.

MVAA HOSTS FIRST-EVER WOMEN VETERANS CONFERENCE

Women veterans from across Michigan gathered in downtown Lansing for two days in June 2022 to learn about advocacy and resources, create new connections and share their testimonies.

The first-ever MVAA Women Veterans Conference successfully brought together nearly 150 women veterans from all walks of life with a goal of raising awareness of their contributions and sacrifices and improving women veteran services.

The historic conference reinforced the MVAA's goal of serving all veterans, including underserved and underrepresented veteran populations. It also highlighted the MVAA's highly successful She is A Veteran (SIAV)

campaign, through which six women veterans tell their powerful stories of life during and after military service.

Erika Hoover, MVAA's women veterans and special populations coordinator, was the driving force behind the conference and the SIAV campaign. Hoover encouraged women veterans to start identifying as veterans and to take their new connections into their everyday lives.

"It's so important to tell our stories. It's so important to connect to our identities. We put that away for too long," said Hoover, a Navy veteran.

MVAA Director Zaneta Adams encouraged participants to work together in their communities to further women veteran causes, boost women veteran membership in veteran organizations and get the word out about the strength and resiliency of women veterans.

"Women veterans are over 43,000 strong in Michigan. We're over 2 million strong and rising across the country. We are not small. And we are mighty," said Adams, an Army veteran.

One of the conference presenters, consultant Lisa Fisher, asked of the women veterans, what is your superpower? The answers came pouring out: *Handling pressure. Empathy. Communication. Organization. Compassion. Analyzation. Resiliency. Leadership.*

Women often forget their gifts and talents, Fisher said. They let society's limiting beliefs get in their heads and hold them back.

"Don't let those naysayers write your story," Fisher told the group. "Write your own story."

To view video highlights from the 2022 Women Veterans Conference, visit youtu.be/I-LW3Lhu-4Y.



SCAN TO WATCH

Visit youtu.be/I-LW3Lhu-4Y or scan with your camera app to see video highlights from the 2022 Women Veterans Conference



Photos on page 15: **A.** Veterans are greeted at the registration table. **B.** Veterans participate in morning yoga at the riverside Rotary Park. **C.** Consultant Lisa Fisher gives a presentation at the conference. **D.** Veterans take a photo with MVAA's Erika Hoover and Director Adams.



A.



B.



C.



D.

FY22 MICHIGAN VETERANS TRUST FUND (MVTF) ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Established by the state Legislature in 1946 to assist World War II veterans, the MVTF continues to provide emergency assistance to veterans and their families as a critical component of the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency and the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The MVTF was established with \$50 million in post-World War II reserve funds; that corpus now sits at \$64.7 million.

In FY22, the MVTF distributed \$1.5 million in emergency grants, assisting nearly 1,200 veterans and dependents. The Trust Fund approved 61% of the emergency aid applications, reviews and appeals it handled. The average emergency grant was \$4,250.



65+ Peacetime Program

For the first time, the MVTF provided emergency assistance to eligible peacetime-era veterans 65 years and older under a new program launched in FY22. Similar to its Emergency Grant Program for wartime-era veterans, the 65+ Peacetime Program allows veterans who served in a peacetime era, have at least 180 days of service and were discharged under honorable conditions to apply for emergency assistance.

Michigan Veterans Entrepreneurial Lab

In partnership with Grand Valley State University, the MVTF continued to sponsor another year of

entrepreneurial training for veterans and their spouses interested in starting their own business. The 12 weeks of training culminates in a pitch competition with a grand prize of \$10,000. The support provided by the MVTF has enabled GVSU to expand the MVE Lab from the Grand Rapids area to Detroit, Ann Arbor, Muskegon and other locations.

Zero Day Career Training

The MVTF purchased a food trailer that will enable Zero Day to expand on its certified food-industry training for veterans. Breaking into the burgeoning food truck industry will allow veterans to capitalize on the growth of this industry and help them launch their own food truck businesses.

GreenPath Financial Wellness

Since 2019, the MVTF Board of Trustees has partnered with GreenPath Financial Wellness, a Michigan nonprofit, to assist all Michigan veterans – including peacetime-era veterans – in achieving financial wellness. GreenPath provides a dedicated phone line for veterans and offers its suite of educational resources and trained financial counselors. As the program grows, this partnership shows promise in assisting Michigan veterans to achieve and maintain financial wellness and self-sufficiency.

MVTF's 65+ PEACETIME PROGRAM HELPS FLINT VETERAN GET NEW FURNACE

Growing up poor in Alabama, Lloyd Clayton joined the Army Reserves while still in high school in 1957. The infantryman eventually went on active duty in 1959, serving in Panama before transitioning out of the service in 1961.

After moving quite a few times, Clayton and his wife eventually settled in Flint. Their home needed a ton of work, most importantly a new furnace, but after running into financial hardship, Clayton couldn't afford to make the repairs. He went to the Genesee County Department of Veterans Affairs to get help.

"I didn't know what to do," Clayton said. "The house was so cold last year. We were using space heaters and our electric bill was around \$600 a month. A Veteran Service Officer told me that the folks at the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund in Lansing could be of assistance."

Clayton was eligible for assistance because of the MVTF's new 65+ Peacetime Program. The assistance helps peacetime-era veterans overcome financial emergencies by covering utility bills, home repairs and rent and mortgage assistance.

Through the MVTF, Clayton was able to get a new furnace worth more than \$5,000 installed at no charge. He hopes his story resonates with other veterans who served during peacetime and were not eligible for MVTF emergency assistance in the past.

"If you're a veteran, you don't have to struggle," Clayton said. "All you have to do is ask."



▲ (Top photo, left to right) MVTF Director Lindell Holm, technician Jessica Green and Chairman of the Board Jim Dempsey. Green received the Warrior Citizen of the Year award at the 2021 Michigan Military & Veterans Gala. (Bottom photo, left to right) U.P. Veteran of the Year Tracey Tippett with Lindell Holm at the 2022 U.P. State Fair.

THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



▼ **(Left photo)** MVA Employment Analyst Joseph Saur speaks at the 2022 Veteran-Friendly Employment Conference. **(Right photo)** MVA Women Veterans & Special Populations Coordinator Erika Hoover talks with an attendee at the 2022 Michigan Veterans Leadership Summit.

As we mark our 10th anniversary of supporting veterans and their families throughout Michigan, the MVA pledges to continue that mission and look for new and innovative ways to serve our veterans in 2023. This includes:

- Emphasizing the Michigan Veteran Resource Service Center (MVRSC) — our 1-800-MICH-VET call center that's available to veterans 24 hours a day, seven days a week through our partnership with Michigan 211.
 - Exploring opportunities for a pilot state dental program for veterans for routine care.
 - Conducting a statewide cemetery feasibility study and working on breaking ground once the location is identified and approved by the VA National Cemetery Administration for the first state VA cemetery.
 - Continuing our work to combat veteran suicide through the Governor's Challenge and with the assistance of a \$1.2 million state grant and a \$750,000 grant from the VA.
- Supporting *all* veterans, including underserved populations such as women veterans, LGBTQ+ veterans and tribal veterans.
 - Continuing to meet the divergent needs of our veterans through the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund, to include the Emergency Grant Program for wartime veterans and the 65+ Peacetime Program for peacetime-era veterans.
 - Strengthening relationships with Veteran Service Organizations, county Veterans Affairs' offices, key transition points for service members leaving active duty and DMVA leadership to support those in the National Guard.
 - Continuing our targeted outreach through CORE while striving to increase federal funding coming to Michigan in support of our state's veterans.

THE LATEST VETERAN DATA

Michigan's Veteran Population (from GDX 2021)

554,281 veterans | Ranked **11** of 53 in veteran population amongst states and territories

85.6%

Percent of White Veterans
(Not Hispanic or Latino)

10.37%

Percent of Black or African
American Veterans

2.86%

Percent of Hispanic
or Latino Veterans

2.02%

Percent of Two or More
Races Veterans

0.64%

Percent of Asian Veterans

0.6%

Percent of American Indian
and Alaska Native Veterans

0.03%

Percent of Native Hawaiian and
Other Pacific Islander Veterans

VA Average Federal Expenditures Per Veteran in Michigan



Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



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Michigan.gov/MVAA