

HENNEPIN COUNTY MINNESOTA



Here. To serve those who have served

Veterans Services

Hennepin County **Human Services**

Annual Report • October 2019



Veterans Services

Hennepin County's nationally accredited staff helps service members, veterans, survivors and family members efficiently navigate the Veterans Administration benefits system.

Our staff are veterans who are trained to help other veterans get the federal, state and county benefits they and their families have earned as a result of their unique service.

Veterans Services-linked programs aim to assist our community of veterans to live their best lives and achieve well-being by providing income, health care and other support. Programs include:



Health and disability

Getting benefits such as service-connected compensation, health care, and dental and optical care



Financial well-being

Connecting to pension programs not connected to military service, such as home loan guarantee and financial assistance



Education

Accessing tuition benefits



Death benefits

Helping with burial benefits, life insurance programs and survivors benefits

Veterans in Hennepin County

50,965 veterans in Hennepin County represent 16 percent of all veterans in Minnesota

5,254

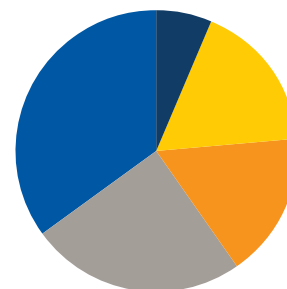
clients served by the office in 2018

11%

increase in veterans benefits applications from 2017 to 2018

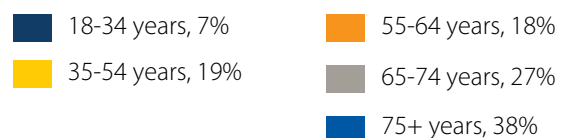
94%

male



Veterans age

The ages of Hennepin County Veterans range from 18 to more than 100 years old. The median age is 65. The aging population directly correlates with continuous decrease of the veteran's population.



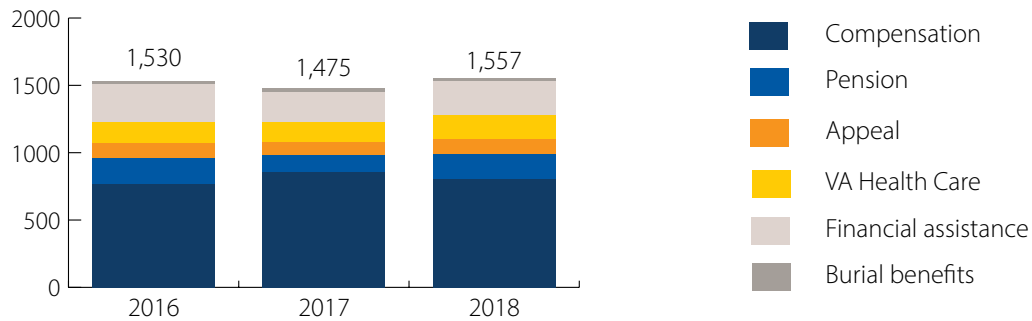
Our accomplishments

Providing assistance to complete applications for benefits accounted for 91% of all interactions in veterans services. In 2018, we assisted veterans in several vital tasks, including:

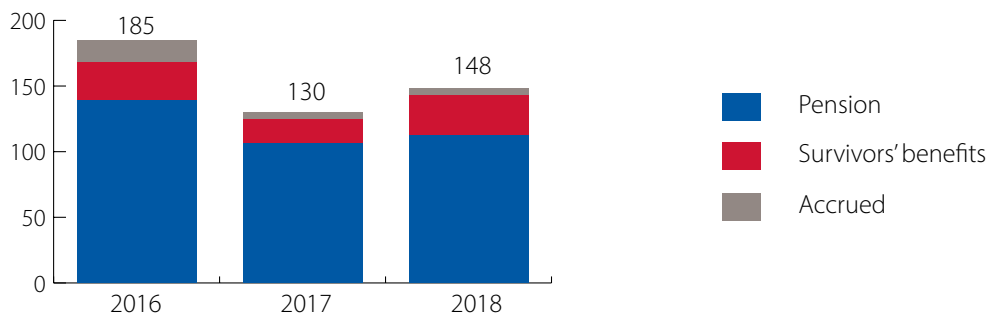
- Completing 804 unique forms, 52% of which were service-connected compensation requests
- Filing 182 pension applications, a 12% increase from 2017
- Channeling \$132,224.79 in dental and optical benefits
- Securing \$97,490.62 in financial assistance

The graph below shows the distribution of benefit applications from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2019.

Veteran benefits



Dependent benefits



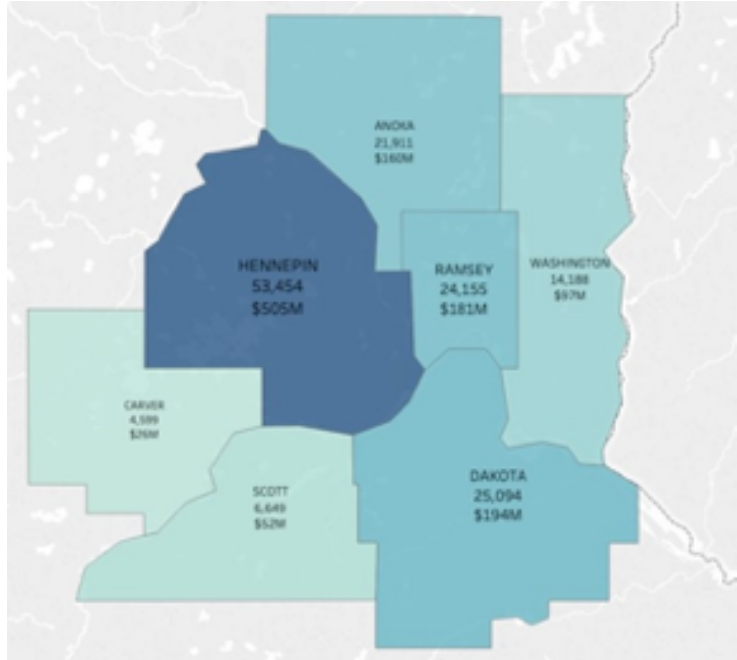
In focus

Complexity of veterans' needs draws more funding

In 2017, Hennepin County received \$505 million from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The current trend indicates that this amount will continue to increase each year, based on complex medical needs and unique disability claims.

53,454 veterans in Hennepin County

150,051 veterans in seven-county metro area



Similar counties outside of Minnesota

Population

Expenditure

Medical Care

Insurance & indemnities

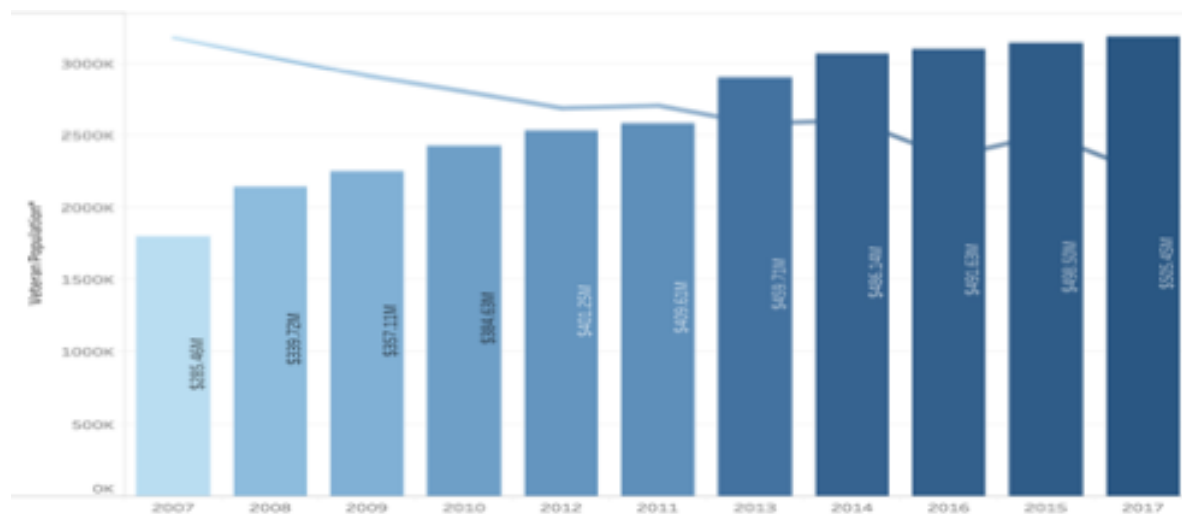
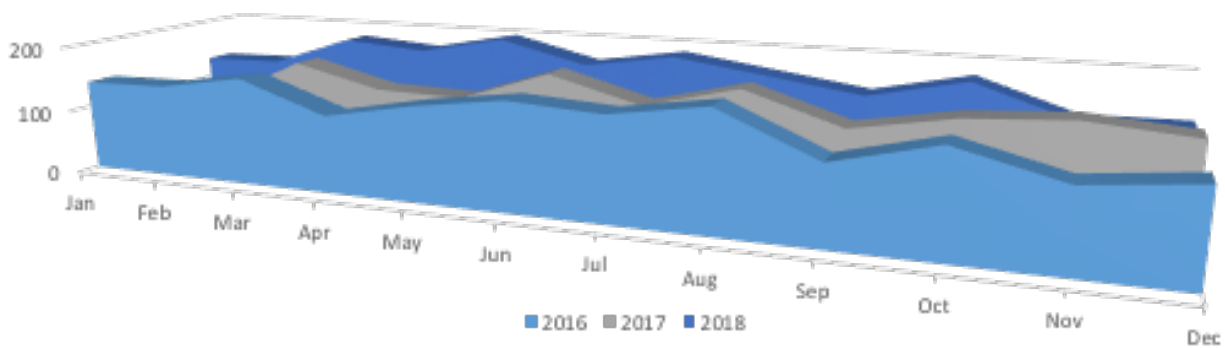
In focus

Investment in veterans increasing

Despite the predicted decrease in the veteran population, the overall federal expenditures for veterans living in Hennepin County is increasing.

The graph below illustrates a 44 percent surge in Veterans Affairs expenditures in Hennepin County over the past 10 years. From 2007 to 2017, these expenditures in Hennepin County increased from \$285 million to \$505 million, a more than 4 percent average growth each year.

Office visits



In focus: Innovations and strategies to improve outcomes

Each generation of veterans has unique circumstances, based on their service. Our work continues to become more complex.

In addition, as Veterans Benefits Administration systems modernize, we have access to much more information than we had in the past. This is good in terms of providing informed advocacy but it is also more time-consuming for our representatives.

Focused effort on disparities

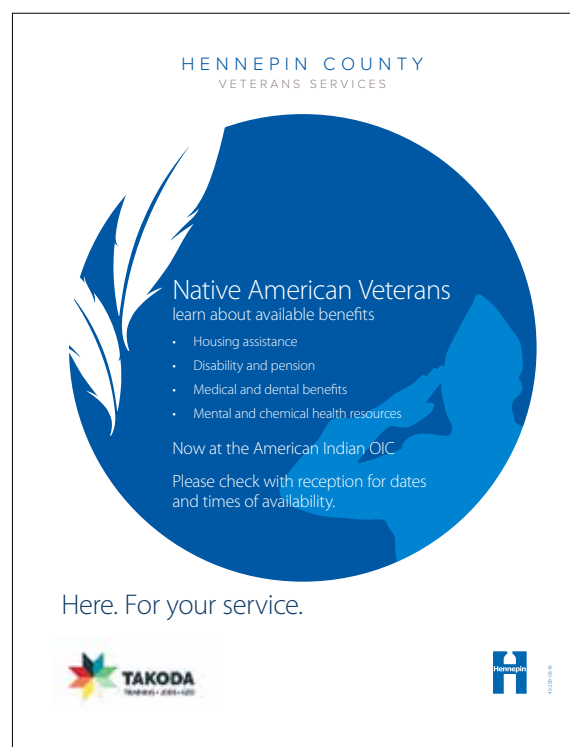
American Indian veterans were the least apt to use their earned VA benefits, according to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. In November 2018, Hennepin County's Veteran Services Office began working with American Indian OIC to assess the needs of their community. Each month, we provide outreach at their location in South Minneapolis.

Homeless Veteran Registry

Since January 2019, there has been an added emphasis by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz to reduce and ultimately eliminate veteran homelessness. As of May 8, 2019, there were total of 128 identified homeless veterans:

- 65 have a housing plan and are awaiting a unit vacancy
- 63 have no housing plan

The Veterans Services Office and the Hennepin County – City of Minneapolis Office to End Homelessness is coordinating efforts around how to focus specifically on this population in hope of seeing a marked reduction in veteran homelessness.



Promotion of American Indian OIC

Hennepin County Board of Commissioners

Mike Opat, District 1

Irene Fernando, District 2

Marion Greene, District 3

Angela Conley, District 4

Debbie Goettel, District 5

Jan Callison, District 6

Jeff Johnson, District 7

Hennepin County

David Hough, administrator

Jennifer DeCubellis, Health and Human Services,
deputy county administrator

Human Services

Jodi Wentland, assistant county administrator

Neil Doyle, senior department administrator,
Veterans Services Office

Health and Human Services
hennepin.us

