



# KOOTENAI COUNTY

## VETERANS SERVICES



February 10, 2022

To: Kootenai County Board of County Commissioners

Subject: KOOTENAI COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES OFFICER (KCVSO) ANNUAL REPORT FY2021

1. The following report is produced annually (Oct-Sep) by the KCVSO to document Veterans Services activities and provide other statistical information concerning veterans and services in Kootenai County, Idaho.
2. An important note, the data in this report is not fully representative of the KCVSO activities. Many of the services and activities that are performed by this office are not necessarily quantifiable. For example, the KCVSO and the Assistant interacts regularly with individuals, groups and agencies (private and public) during and after normal hours, many of which are unscheduled and impromptu, and not formal in nature. Furthermore, software and resources for data are constantly evolving.
3. This is an evolving report and services provided are constantly developing with changes in the Department of Veterans Affairs and other State and local agencies that administer services and benefits to Veterans. Comparing data in this report with previous fiscal years may not be a direct comparison. As an example, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21 completely changed operating procedures, attitudes and client expectations.
4. The onset of COVID-19 caused a brief significant drop in request for services which saw a rebound in 2021. Most functions with-in the department have returned to normal operations, with some minor changes.
5. Significant note -- Incoming phone calls increased significantly, up 63% from 2020. Furthermore, Pension inquiries rose significantly which would explain some the differences in numbers because pensions require 5-10 times more undocumented office prep prior to completing any forms. The aging population of Kootenai County appears to shifting more VSO emphasis Pensions, rather than claims. Lastly, the recently hired state VSO has become much more proficient and is taking some of the load off the county VSO.

6. Community Outreach was suspended at the start of COVID-19 and remained limited during 2021. The elderly in particular were reluctant to have contact with strangers in their homes. Lastly, community outreach in the form of attending veteran service organization meetings, providing training in the community, and face-to-face networking was rebounding in 2021 but not pre COVID-19 levels.

7. During the 2021 fiscal year, the Veterans Services Office continued to observe a significant number of new Veteran relocating to the area which is consistent with the region's exponential growth in recent years.

8. Lastly, VA total expenditures in Kootenai County have increased substantially over 2020 by \$24 million, up from \$138 million to \$162 million. Furthermore, Compensation and Pension expenditures made up \$10 million of the VA's increase in expenditures that equated to a 9% increase. Compensation and Pension expenditures are monies that are given directly to the Veteran as nontaxable income as a result of the KCVSO claims process.

9. Points of contact for this report are Thomas Freeman (KCVSO) and Jessica Christensen (Assistant to the KCVSO) at 208 446-1090.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Freeman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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## **FISCAL YEAR REPORT OCT 2020 – SEP 2021**

Compiled By:

Kootenai County  
Veteran Services Office

**Thomas Freeman  
Veteran Services, Director**

*“Veterans’ Helping Veterans’*



## VA Dollars Brought Back to the County Through Claims

Number of Veterans geographically in KC = 14,631 <sup>(1)</sup>

Kootenai County Veterans Service Officer Office Staff = 2

### VA Expenditures By Type of Claim <sup>(2)</sup>

Compensation/Pension: \$85,361,000

Education/Voc Rehab: \$5,967,000

Insurance and Indemnity: \$829,000

Medical Care: \$70,722,000

**TOTAL \$162,916,000**

(1) Population from ID Dept. of Labor 2020 report. Population growth reporting usually lags behind actual - Est. 2020 County Vet Population 15 -16,000

(2) VA Expenditures (2020) derived online from the VA's National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. <https://www.va.gov/vetdata/Expenditures.asp> (see expenditures table)



## **AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF VETERANS SEEN AND MOST COMMON CLAIM FILED IN THOSE GROUPS <sup>(3)</sup>**

WWII 9% (Hearing Loss/Pension)

KOREAN 10% (Hearing Loss/Pension)

Vietnam 37% (Hearing Loss/Agent Orange Presumptives)

Gulf War/OEF/OIF 28% (PTSD/Sustained Injuries/Education)

Peace Time 16% (Hearing Loss/Sustained Injuries)

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH <sup>(4)</sup>**

Shut-in Visits - Average (2) per month

VA briefings To Area Agencies - Average (1) per month

Attendance at Service Organizations - Average (1) per month

(3) Data was derived from VetraSpec Reports. VetraSpec is a licensed secure online software solution management system used for Veteran claims built for Veteran services officers and state departments.

(4) As of March 2020, Community Outreach was suspended due to COVID-19 precautions



## Comparison from FY 2019 and FY 2020 <sup>(5,6)</sup>

<b><u>FISCAL YEAR</u></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>2021</u></b>
Scheduled Appt.	869	750
Walk-in	1607	769
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2476</b>	<b>1591</b>

<b><u>AVERAGE PER MONTH</u></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>2021</u></b>
Scheduled Appt.	72	63
Walk-in	206	133
Aver. Length Appt Initial claim		60-130 minutes
Aver. Length Walk-In Apt.		5-15 minutes
Aver. Request for records		5 minutes
Aver. Returned Call Time		10-45 minutes

(5) Data on this page was derived from internal Kootenai County Veterans Services Office records – daily sign-in sheets and calendar entries

(6) KCVSO Office consisted of (1) County VSO and (1) State VSO. In January, the state added an additional State VSO position to North Idaho, working out of the KCVSO Office, with a total of 2 State VSOs and (1) County VSO.



## Comparison from FY 2019 and FY 2020 (cont.)

<b>RECORDS</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b> <sup>(7)</sup>
New Clients Added	261	206
Records Edited	2442	2940
<b>Forms Prepared</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b> <sup>(7)</sup>
	2552	1310
<b>Phone Calls Returned</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b> <sup>(8)</sup>
	2551	4163

<sup>(7)</sup> VetraSpec Reports. VetraSpec is licensed secure online software solution management system used for Veteran claims built for Veteran service officers and state departments.

<sup>(8)</sup> Phone logs from Oct 2020 to Sep 2021.