Jim Hoessle
Secretary

Randall Schmidt
President

Phillip Grassa
Commissioner

Joe Destro
Vice President

Jack Forster
Commissioner

Medina County Veterans Service Commission

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E-mail: veterans@medinacountyveterans.org | Website: www.medinacountyveterans.org

Veterans Service Office | Medina County, Ohio
End of Year Brief, CY 2019

February 2020

Our Pledge

When you come into the County Veterans Service Office one of our knowledgeable associates will assist you.
The people that work in the Medina County Veterans Service Office have a compassionate understanding of the problems, which confront veterans, widows, widowers, and their families.

At the Medina County Veterans Service Office, we are deeply concerned with the assistance, care and support that our Veterans receive. We understand that alleviating the suffering that accompanies an accident, illness or death is important. In most cases we are able to offer veterans, their surviving spouse, and/or dependent children the assistance they need and deserve. It is our duty to ensure our Veterans have the very best service possible. This is at the heart of our mission here at the Medina County Veterans Service Office.

Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have a problem

Director & Staff
Medina County Veterans Service Office

Our Mission

The Medina County Veterans Service Office has a mission to provide temporary aid and assistance to veterans, dependents and survivors in time of need and provide assistance when submitting claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
The Medina County Veterans Service Office is a state mandated agency dedicated to aiding Medina County Veterans during times of need.

Our History

The Veterans Service Assistance program was started over one hundred years ago (1886) to assist the Union Soldiers and their families in times of need. Each of the 88 counties in Ohio has a board of five appointed Veterans Service Commissioners who administer the program for their respective county.

Our purpose is not to sustain and subsidize an unsatisfactory lifestyle. Rather it is to provide temporary immediate assistance to those who will make a conscientious effort to find a permanent solution to their current financial dilemma.

Medina County
Veterans Service Commission

Our Services

The Medina County Veterans Service Office provides two basic services:

1. Temporary immediate financial aid and assistance to eligible veterans and family members who have demonstrated a need as set forth by the Commission.
2. Assist veterans, family members and survivors when applying to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for benefits.

Our assistance includes but is not limited to:

- Financial Assistance
- Rent and mortgage payments
- Utilities: Gas, Electric and Water
- Food and personal hygiene items
- Certain Medical
- Transportation to and from VA Medical Centers in Cleveland (Wade Park), Parma and Akron, Ohio
- Grave markers and flags
- Free Notary for Veterans & Families
- Veterans Identification Cards (unofficial) through the Medina County Recorders Office
- Free transportation on the Medina County Public Transit (MCPT) with proper ID
- Dental Program in partnership with the Medina County Health Department

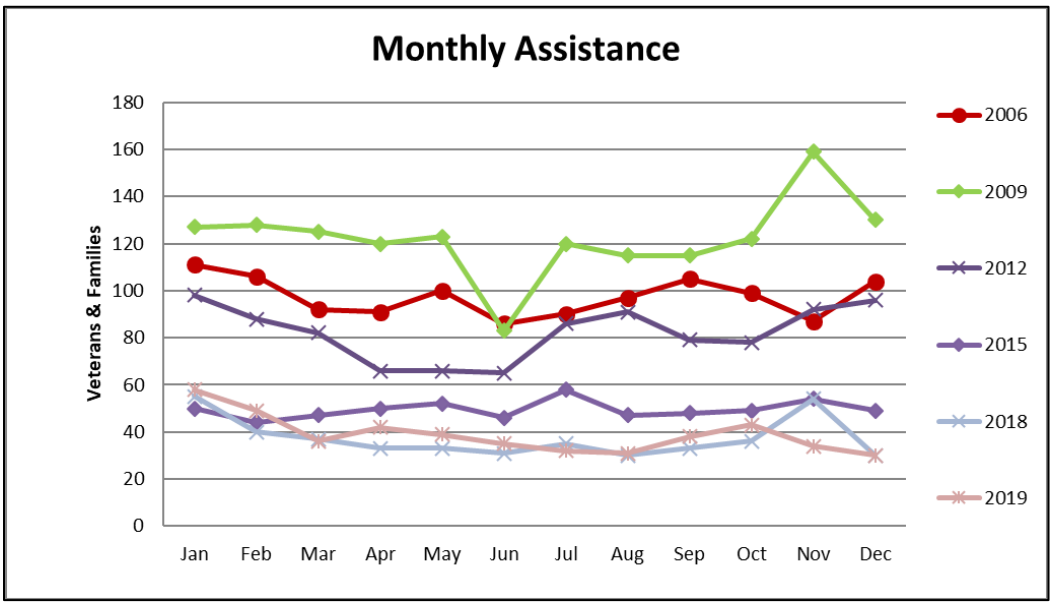
Service Assistance:

- Proper submission of claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Representation at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA)
- Preparations of forms and paperwork
- Documentation of claims and pertinent data
- Submission for records, awards decorations and medals
- DD 214 certification
- Employment resources (website)

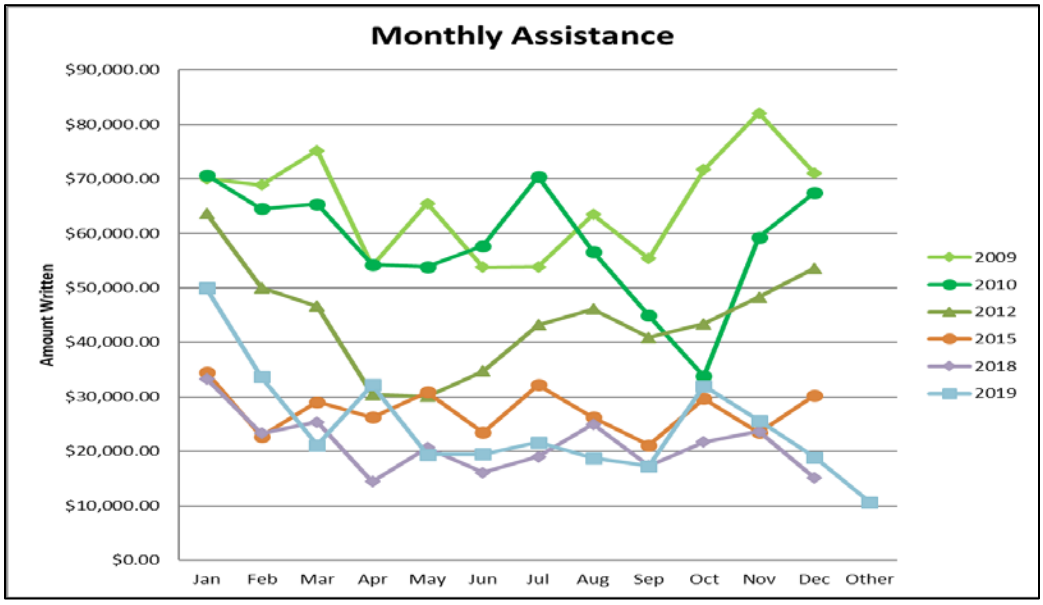
Our services are FREE of charge!

Assistance Program

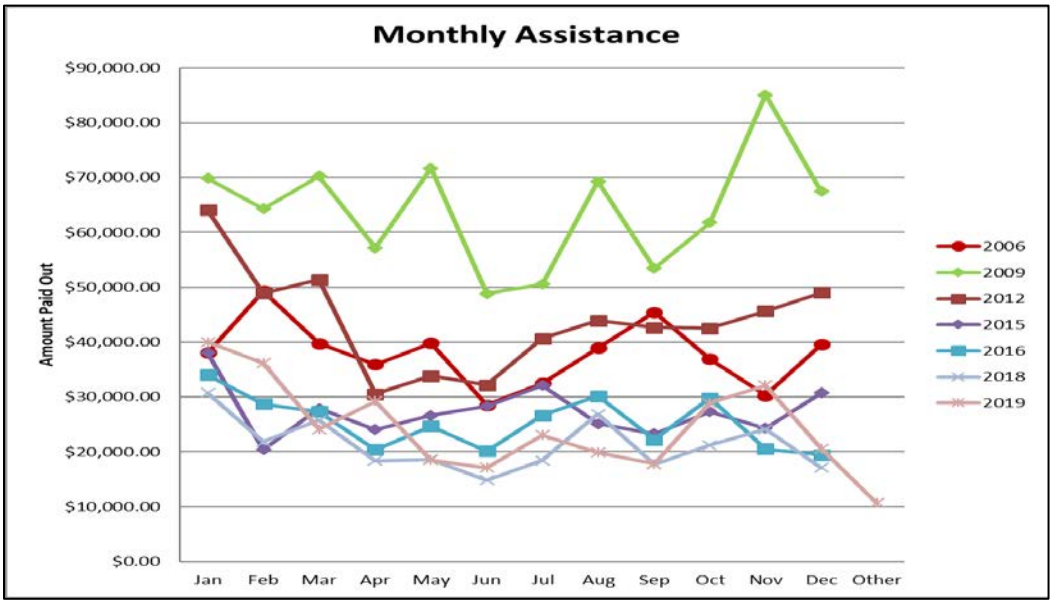
The Medina County Veterans Service Office provided relief for 479 Medina County Veterans and their families in 2019, a slight increase from 2018.
New financial assistance clients made up just 19% of those cases, up from 6% in 2018.



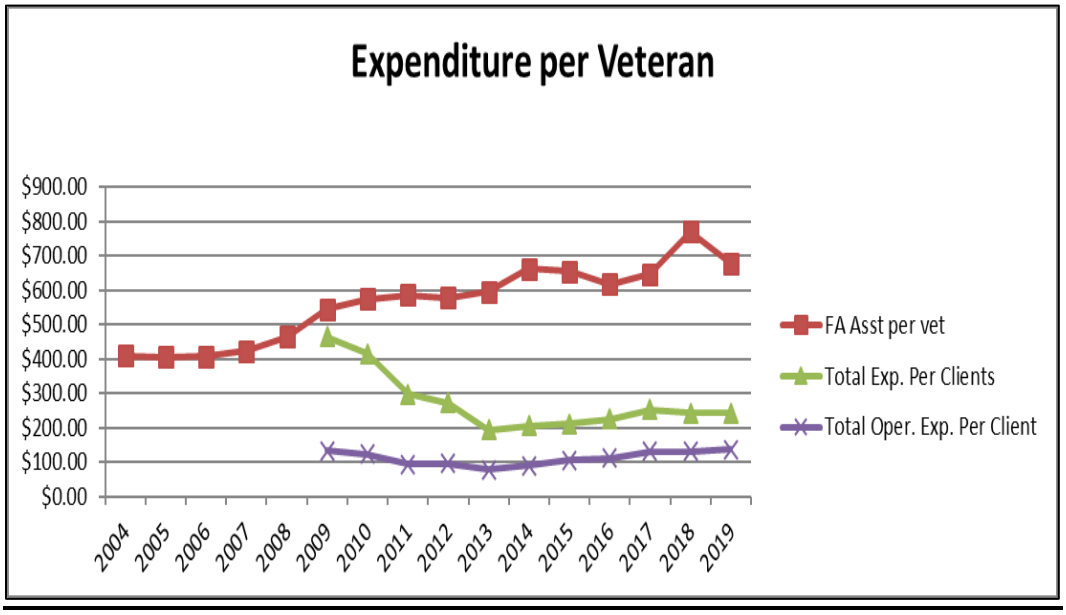
The following graph represents $320,558.76 in vouchers written for 2019.



The following graph represents $318,144.59 in vouchers paid out for 2019.

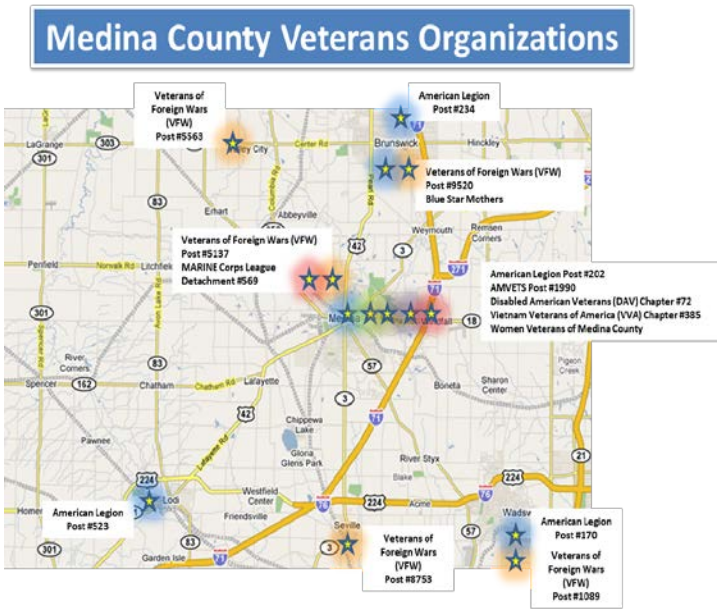


Our average dollar amount spent on financial assistance per Veteran was $678.70, almost $100 less than 2018.



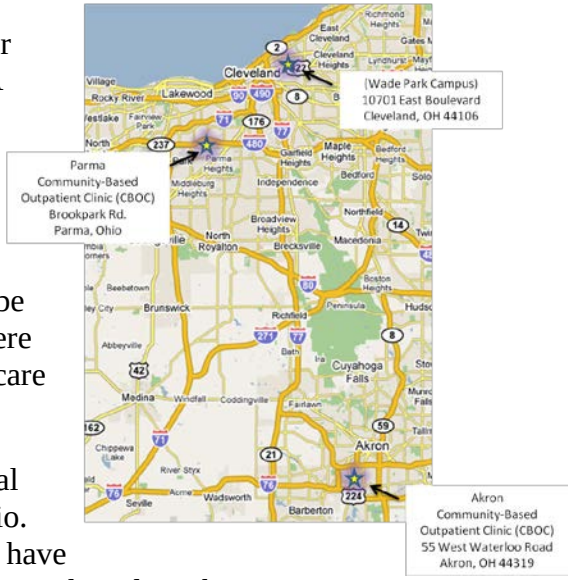
Veterans Organizations

Medina County has seventeen active veteran organizations throughout the county. These organizations truly are on the front lines when it comes to helping Veterans and their dependents. Aside from the community involvement, they also provide meals, clothes and other much-needed resources. These organizations are key to our success, by referring veterans or assisting in our efforts to provide basic needs in a time of suffering. These various organizations are also, the ones from which the commissioners for the Medina County Veterans Service Commission are selected.



The Louis Stokes; VAMC-Cleveland VA Medical Center

Medical services provided to our Veterans at one of the many VA hospitals or Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) reduces the strain on local medical facilities. It also reduces the amount of dollars spent out of Medicare and Medicaid since a large percentage of these Veterans maybe under the poverty level or have no Medical coverage. There has been a enormous increase since the affordable healthcare act came into play.



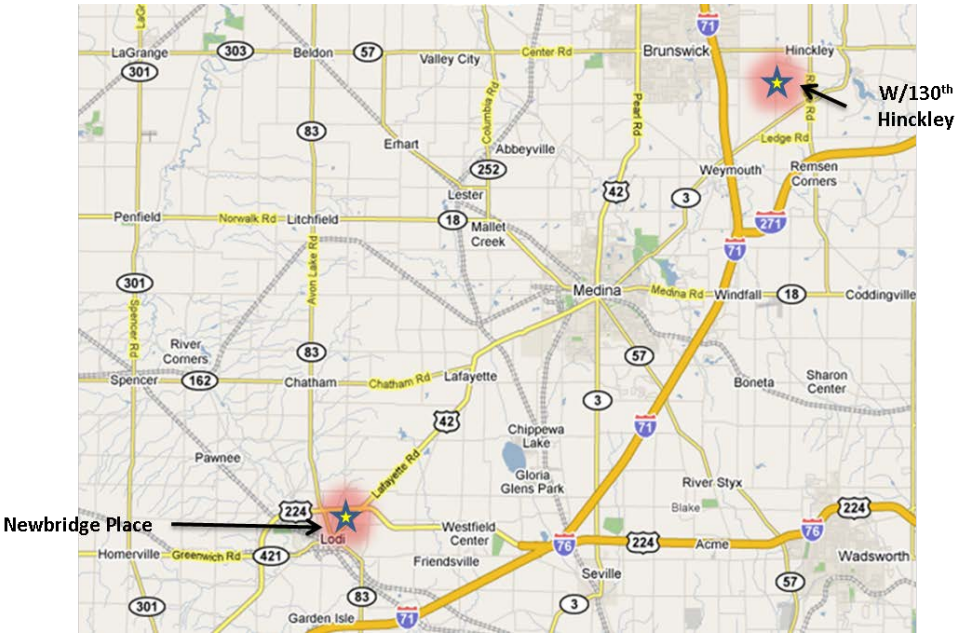
In 2019, we transported 1,207 Veterans to the VA Medical centers in Cleveland (Wade Park), Parma and Akron, Ohio. If this service was not available, these veterans might not have been able to receive the medical care they needed and deserved. It also takes some burden off the county medical system. Many of these veterans would have no other choice but to use Medicaid at one of the local medical centers.

Vet Center:

- In May of 2011, we partnered with the Parma Vet Center and it has almost been seven years since we have provided space for a VA Vet Center here in Medina. Vet Centers provide FREE counseling to <u>all</u> combat veterans and their families. This has been a great service. Clinical Phycologist Aaron Reedy from the Westside Vet Center in Parma is at the Professional Building off the square every Monday and Wednesday, you can make an appointment by calling 440-845-5023, and telling them you would like an appointment in Medina.
- 386 Veterans have been seen in 2019. There is also a group session for Vietnam Veterans.

<u>VA Medical Center Group Homes within Medina County</u>

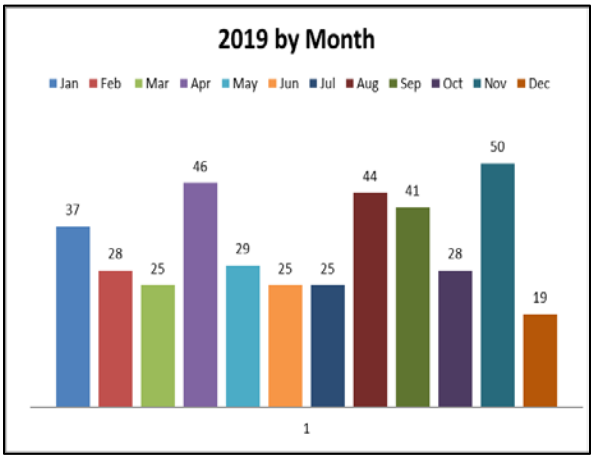
Our county currently has two group homes for Veterans that are monitored by the VA. They are:

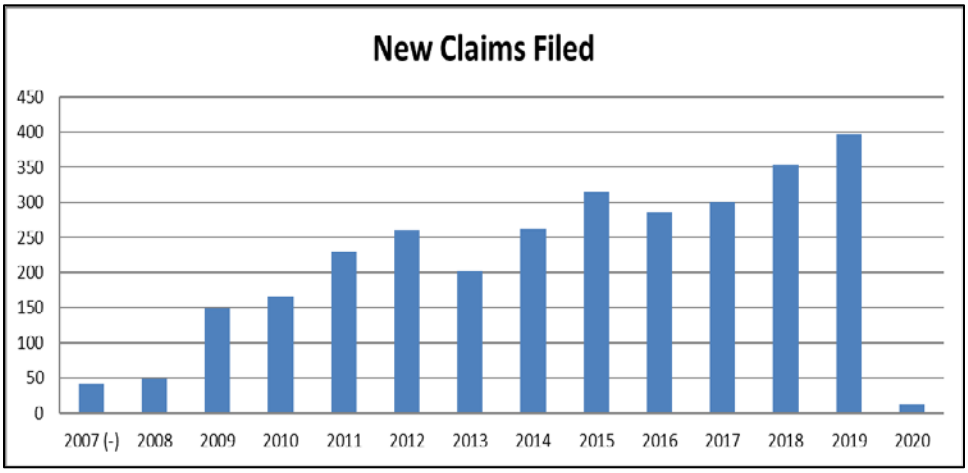


The VA also contracts with several nursing home within the county, our office has assisted them so that they may become certified and provide beds to eligible Veterans.

Number of New Claims Filed With the Department of Veterans Affairs

2019	
Month	New VA Claims
Jan	37
Feb	28
Mar	25
Apr	46
May	29
Jun	25
Jul	25
Aug	44
Sep	41
Oct	28
Nov	50
Dec	19
Total	**397**





Current Claim Log

Claim Status 2019	
Pending Claim	258
Closed Claim	321
Appeal	3
Not a Claim	88
Total:	670

Total Claim Inventory	
Pending Claim	272
Closed Claim	3497
Appeal	15
Not a Claim	475
Total	4259

VA Benefits Filed for Veterans and Their Spouses CY 2019 by the MCVSO

We filed 397/670 rating/total VA claims in 2019 along with 36 appeals or higher-level reviews and assisted 2,449 veterans and family members with paperwork for the VA. All together with van riders, immediate assistance, VA claims and ancillary benefits we made 4,259 appointments in 2019.

2018 Compensation & Pension:

- 2018 we saw a slight decrease in C&P expenditures ($33.0 to $32.4 million dollars) from the Department of Veterans Affairs within Medina County.

2018 Education, Voc. Rehab & Insurance:

- $4.5 million dollars have been invested in our county's veterans through educational programs and payouts for insurance.

2018 Medical:

- 2018, $31.0 million dollars in medical expenditures from the Department of Veterans Affairs within Medina County.

***The VA spent $69.2 million dollars on the Veterans of Medina County in 2018, which is an increase of almost $4 million from the previous year.

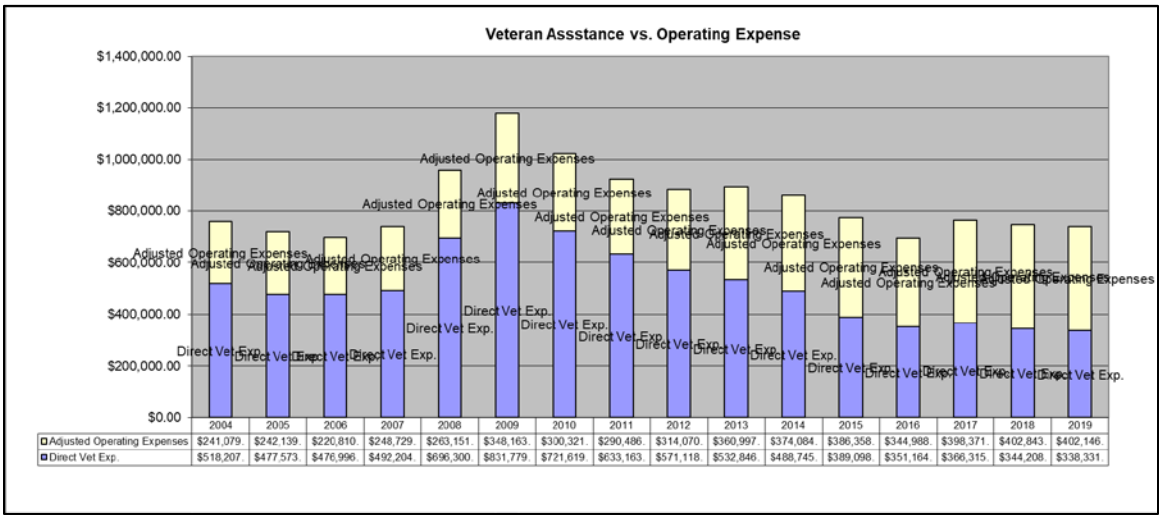
The Geographic Distribution of Expenditures (GDX) for 2019 will be released in April 2020.

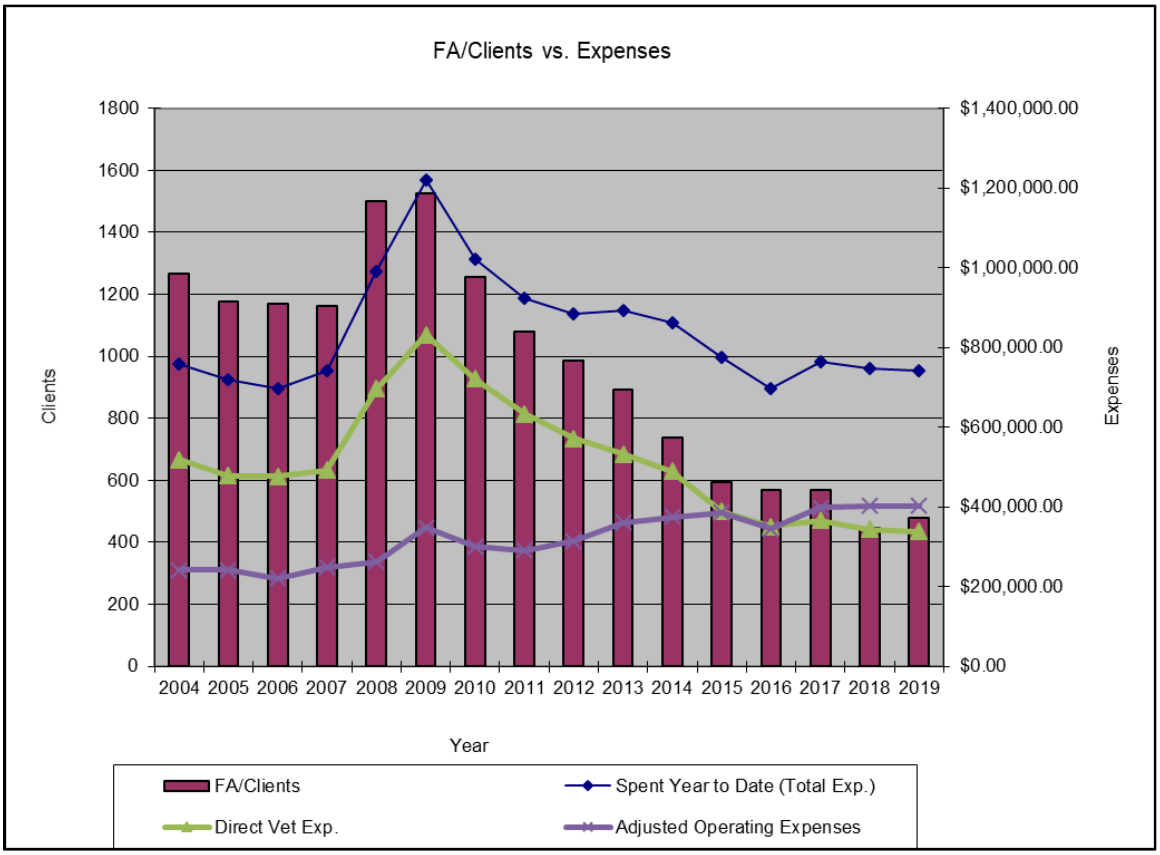
	2019	
	Vet	Other
VA & Federal Benefits		
VA POA	285	
Sup/HLR/COMP/DIC	261	26
Pension	30	46
NODAppeals	16	
EVR		
Medical (1010 series)	87	
Education	23	
Home Loan	7	
Insurance	4	
Marker	7	
Burial	37	
Memorial Certificate		32
Pre-Need Burial	49	
Discharge/Records NPRC	212	
ODVS	6	
DIPRIS	14	

State Benefits		
OVH	2	
H. S. Diploma	0	
Ohio Bonus	2	0
MIRF	0	
County Benefits		
Financial Assistance (Clients)	467	
Financial Assistance (Families)	161	
Financial Assistance (NEW)	92	
Flag Cases		69
Indigent Burial		
Van Riders	1207	
Other		
Referrals		
Misc./Letters & Referrals		
Total Clients Seen	2449	603
Wadsworth		
Vet Center	386	
Food Distribution		

Expenses

As we continue to see more Veterans and assist them with applying for the benefits, they have earned. We also have managed to keep our operating expenses relatively low. Our expenses slightly lower than the previous year.





Summary

Our office ensures the veterans of our county receive the maximum benefits they are due by law. The amount of money that our veterans receive from benefits each year significantly reduces the strain on both state and county funds. Each veteran or widow that receives a VA pension or compensation check has an increased income, which brings dollars into our county. VA benefits also help pay for assisted living or in-home healthcare for our senior veterans and their widows. This reduces the amount of assistance that other county agencies have to provide our Veterans and their widows.

Outreach Events:

1. Nursing home and assisted living briefings (2)
2. Senior Center briefings Medina, Wadsworth and Brunswick (1ea.)
3. Benefits briefings at Veterans organizations throughout Medina County (4)
4. Senior Fair, Medina, Wadsworth and Brunswick (1ea)
5. Power Piston Show IX Center
6. Senior panels (3)
7. Medina County Fair & Veterans Day at the Fair
8. Armed Forces Day Bar-b-Cue
9. Wadsworth Blue-tip Parade
10. Medina Memorial Day Parade
11. Vietnam Veterans Day Breakfast

Our partnership with the various county agencies has been a great success in not only finding our veterans and connecting them with their benefits, but also in combating fraud and savings in duplication of services.

In 2019, we spent $7,492.79 on training for personal in our office. Some of this training is state mandated and other is so we can maintain our accreditations. If it were not for the training our office receives and the in-house training program we have developed, we would not be able to provide the level of expertise to our clients that we do.

We currently have two accredited personnel and are currently accredited with 11 organizations through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) through:

1. American Legion
2. American Red Cross Ohio Department of Veterans Services (ODVS)
3. American Veterans (AMVETS)
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Marine Corps League
6. Military Order of Purple Heart (MOPH)
7. National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO)
8. Ohio State Association of County Veteran Service Officers (OSACVSO)
9. The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
10. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
11. Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)

This enables us to file a claim through the VA and then have access to the Veterans file, both telephonically and over the web. This has required extensive training for our staff on Federal guidelines and privacy policies. This is an enormous benefit to our veterans and their families and saves us much time when navigating the claim file to find out if there are any problems.

Our two ongoing objectives are:

1. Ensure that the veterans of the County are aware of the benefits that they are due and that they receive those benefits, whether they are federal, state, or county benefits,

and

2. Continue to work with and grow a network throughout the County so that the citizens understand the accomplishments of the veterans and the successes they will bring to Medina County in the future.

We continue to strive to ensure that the taxpayer's money is used in a fiscally responsible way.

With the upswing in the economy and as we look ahead, I believe our focus has moved from financial assistance to providing the much-needed assistance with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs as well as finding new and innovative way to assist our veterans. Along with our continued transportation service with Medina County public Transit (MCPT), we have recently formalized an agreement with Medina County Health Department (MCHD) to provide dental care to Veterans that meet our financial assistance guidelines. We have always provided this service, nonetheless this agreement will help us to streamline the process for both organizations as well as the veteran. With record numbers of Veterans becoming aware of and applying for benefits along with the aging population of our Vietnam Veterans, we must continue to ensure that we can provide the expertise when applying for Veterans Benefits. We will continue to provide the much-needed assistance that our veterans and their family members deserve as well as continue to operate in a conservative manner. The needs of our veterans are the utmost important thing we do when reaching any decision. I know it is with great credit to the Medina County Veterans Service Commission as well as the Medina County Commissioners and their Administration that our veterans and their families will continue to receive the much-needed assistance that they deserve.

Respectfully
Edward Zackery
Director/Veterans Service Officer
Medina County, Ohio