



# Veterans Assistance Fund Report 2018



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# VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND OVERVIEW

The Clark County Veterans Assistance Fund (VAF) provides assistance to indigent Veterans and their families. The use of the fund was developed in accordance with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 73.08 and Clark County Ordinance Chapter 2.29 Veterans Relief.

Washington State law established the Veterans Assistance Fund as a source of property tax dollars to be utilized for the needs of indigent Veterans and their families. A portion of property tax collected in Clark County is earmarked for the VAF.

The use of the VAF is the responsibility of Clark County through Community Services with input from the Veterans Advisory Board. The Clark County Council has statutory oversight regarding the use and expenditures of the fund.

Clark County, with input from the Veterans Advisory Board, contracts with nonprofit agencies to provide assistance to Veterans using the VAF. Since July 1, 2014, the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC) has administered emergency relief services at their offices located at 1305 Columbia Street in Vancouver. The County is responsible for all contracts, invoices, monitoring and reporting for these funds.

Veterans must meet certain eligibility requirements to receive assistance from the VAF. Assistance is provided without discrimination and in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

The following types of emergency assistance can be provided to eligible Veterans:

- Rent Assistance or other Housing Support
- Heating and Utilities
- Food Assistance
- Transportation
- Prescription Coverage
- Burial Assistance
- Clothing, Tools and Licensing
- Auto Repair
- Dental Care
- Communication Assistance
- Storage Fees
- Referral Services

The Policies and Procedures governing the VAF, as well as other information about the Veterans Advisory Board, can be found online at: [www.clark.wa.gov/veterans](http://www.clark.wa.gov/veterans)

# VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD

The establishment of the Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) is described in RCW 73.08.035. The law states that the board shall advise the county legislative authority on the needs of local indigent Veterans, the resources available to local indigent Veterans, and programs that could benefit the needs of local indigent Veterans and their families.

The VAB consists of representatives from posts of nationally recognized Veterans' service organizations within Clark County as well as Veterans from the community at large. A majority of board members must come from nationally recognized Veterans' service organizations.

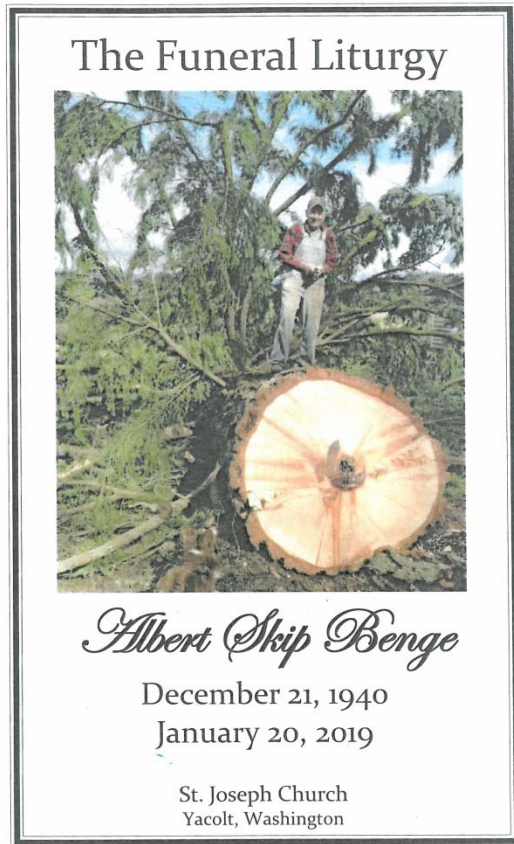
Meetings of the VAB are held on the second Thursday of each month at 2 PM in the County Council Hearing Room at 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, WA. Meetings are televised live on CVTV and archived for online viewing at [www.cvtv.org](http://www.cvtv.org).

VAB officers in 2018 included Morris Giesler as Chair, Kelly Jones as Vice Chair and Bruce Maas as Secretary. Other members in 2018 included:

<u>POST</u>	<u>PRIMARY</u>	<u>ALTERNATE</u>
40 et 8	Steve Slegers	Patrick Locke
American Legion #14	Dixie Hotaling	
American Legion #176	Michael Gibson	Jonathan Frederick
American Veterans #6	John Lovejoy	Michael Langsdorf
DAV Chapter #4	Morris Giesler	Frank Hyatt
Korean War Assoc. #321	Earl Edwards	Jason Atkins
Marine Corps League #826	Ron Brandon	Steve Slegers
VFW #4278	Shannon Roberts	Sarah Aktepy
VFW #7824	Bruce Maas	Tonja Wark
VFW # 12028	Skip Benge	
Vietnam Vets #512	Greg Whitson	Nick Herber
<b>Members At-Large</b>	Kevin Lawson	
	David Daly	
	Kelly Jones	
	Alan Martinez	
	James Mead	
	Bryan McGillis	
	Michael Harding	

## VETERANS ADVISORY MEMBER MEMORIAL

Skip Bengé was a long-time member of the Veterans Advisory Board, representing VFW post #12028, in Yacolt. Sadly, Skip passed away unexpectedly on January 20, 2019.



He was born at St. Joseph's Hospital in Vancouver, WA to Albert and Alice Bengé, the first of five children. Skip graduated high school and enlisted in the US Marine Corps in 1959 and was honorably discharged in 1964.

Ever the outdoorsman, he returned to Yacolt and logging. He spent several years in Petersburg, Alaska working in the woods and returned to work with his partners at SST Timber Cutters. He later enjoyed working for Columbia Helicopters traveling around the world and throughout the western states in a variety of positions ending with bullbuck until his retirement in 2013.

Skip loved baseball and passed that on to his boys and many others he coached and worked with over 18 years with the North Clark Little League. He served as a city councilman for the town of Yacolt and always had the citizen's best interests at heart.

Whether through church activities, veteran causes, or Meals on Wheels (Yacolt and Amboy), he was always willing to help out. Running was something he enjoyed and he participated in many charity runs. The OHSU Foundation was another of his charity benefits.

He was a third generation member of St. Joseph the Workman Catholic Church in Yacolt and a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Skip is survived by his wife, Pattie; sons; Shawn (Erica), Leonard (Angela), Randall and Scotty; grandchildren, Amanda, Ashlee, Ian, Dylan and Evan; his sisters, Charlotte, Charlene (Bill) and Cyd; along with several aunts, numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his brother, Michael.

# EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Clark County contracts with the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC) to assist Veterans with emergency relief as needed. Staff at the CCVAC interview Veterans to determine their needs and provide financial assistance through the Veterans Assistance Fund. There is a variety of safety net services available to Veterans who meet the eligibility requirements.

**In 2018, the CCVAC provided a total of \$241,282 to Veteran households for 813 service requests.** This is in comparison to 2017, when the CCVAC provided a total of \$367,294 to Veteran households for 1,253 service requests. In 2016, a total of \$368,718 was provided for 886 services to Veterans.

To be eligible for assistance, a Veteran must:

- have an honorable discharge status or a general under honorable conditions with a medical or physical discharge,
- have household income less than 150% of the annual federal poverty limit for most services, or 200% of the poverty limit for housing or dental service, and
- be a current Clark County resident and have proof of Washington State residency for the previous 12 consecutive months.

### 2018 Income Limits for VAF Assistance

Family Size	Monthly 150%	Monthly 200%
1	\$1,518	\$2,023
2	\$2,058	\$2,743
3	\$2,598	\$3,463
4	\$3,138	\$4,183

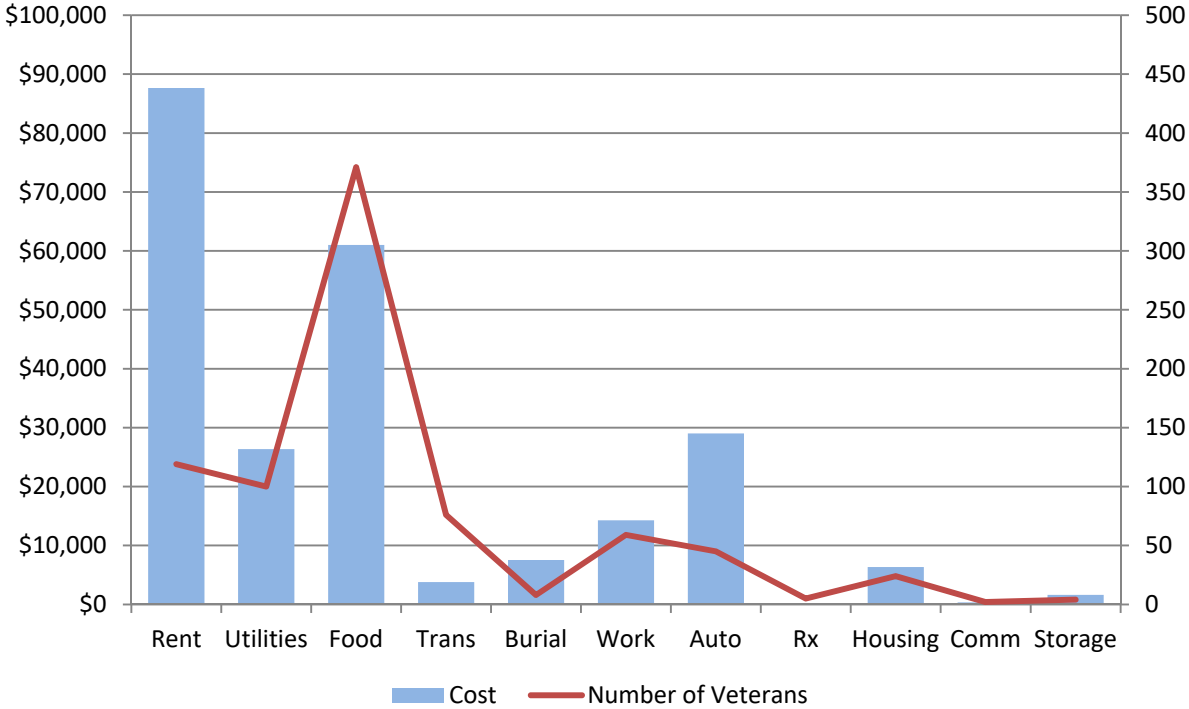
A copy of the Policies and Procedures that govern the assistance types and amounts, the application for assistance and the appeal form is available through the CCVAC, or online at: <http://www.clark.wa.gov/veterans/>.

### 2018 Changes to Policy

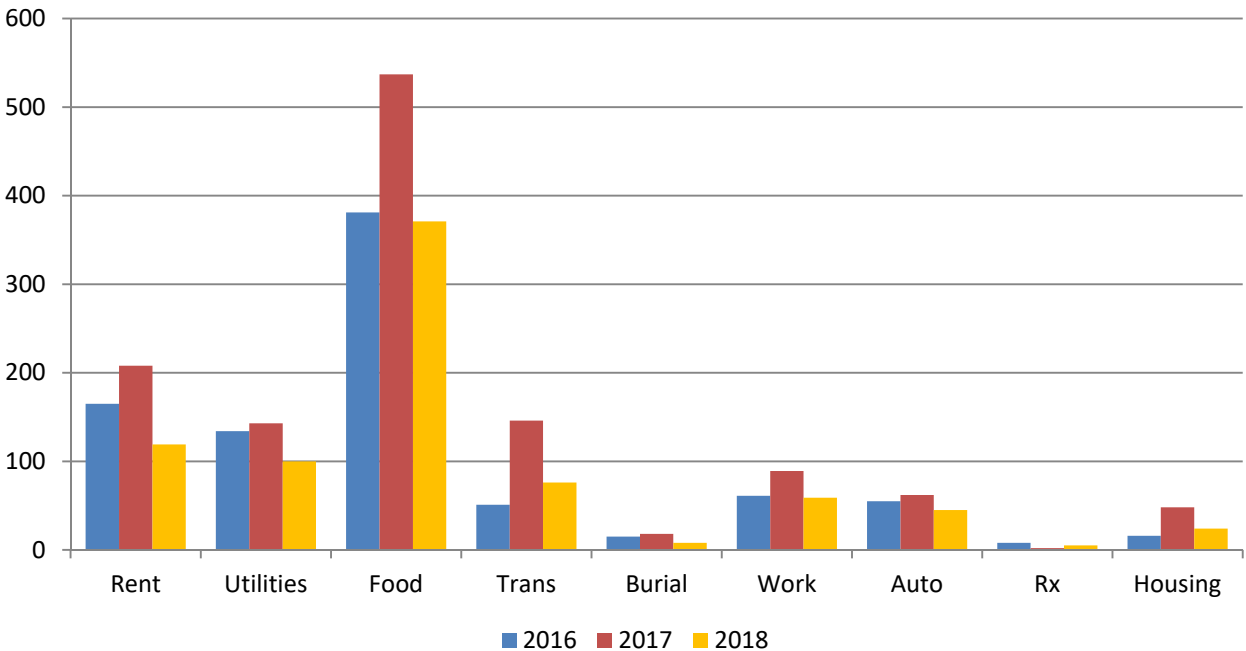
In 2018, the Veterans Advisory Board recommended two new types of assistance for Veterans. In consultation with the CCVAC, it was suggested that assistance with communication and storage be provided. This recommendation was unanimously approved by the Clark County Council in June. Up to \$200 in a 12-month period is available for help with communication costs and up to \$750 is a 24-month period is available to Veteran households that need help with storage cost to save their belongings.

# EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

## VAF Services Provided in 2018



## Three Year Comparison by Number of Services





## CCVAC OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED

The Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC) opened in May 2011, and thousands of Veterans have visited to receive support, safety net assistance and access to VA benefits. A group of dedicated volunteers help with all aspects of the CCVAC, from daily operations to special events.

CCVAC provides Veterans with services related to employment, physical and mental health, homelessness, Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and other referrals. Veteran Service Officers volunteer to assist Veterans in completing applications or appeals for retirement or disability claims through the VA. The CCVAC also coordinates the annual Veterans Stand Down.



	CCVAC Visits	Vets Served by VSO	Homeless Vets Served	Value of Volunteer Hours
January	243	51	59	\$21,436
February	191	57	77	18,479
March	231	71	89	22,776
April	226	60	75	24,321
May	214	58	80	26,783
June	251	28	72	22,655
July	206	17	69	22,933
August	226	23	58	31,744
September	358	18	88	55,935
October	220	14	60	23,011
November	250	42	57	22,480
December	450	38	55	17,147
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,066<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>477</b>	<b>839<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>\$309,700<sup>3</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup>Compare to 6,820 visits in 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Compare to 883 visits in 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Based on the independent sector value of volunteer labor, \$24.69/hour.

## ANNUAL VETERANS STAND DOWN

The one-day Stand Down event is coordinated by the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC). This year's Stand Down was held at the Vancouver Veterans Administration (VA) campus. The event was held Saturday, September 15, 2018, and provided hot meals, showers, haircuts, health and dental services to local Veterans. These Veterans were also connected with other resources such as information about VA benefits, college opportunities and employment services. Clothes, backpacks, boots, survival items and hygiene necessities were also distributed at the Stand Down.

**In 2018, the one-day event served a total of 221 Veterans, of which 91 were homeless.** The 2017 Stand Down saw 249 Veterans; of these, 105 identified as homeless.

Most of the Veterans who attended were male (194), and this year saw a record number of volunteers and providers. A total of 177 volunteers and 66 providers helped serve 467 meals, gave out 1.5 tons of clothing, 70 pairs of boots, and 42 haircuts. In addition, 30 pets were seen by a veterinarian and 9 Veterans were seen by a dentist at the Stand Down.



## FREE CLINIC VETERANS DENTAL PROGRAM

Clark County contracts with the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington to provide two seven-hour dental clinics per month for eligible Veterans. Veterans can receive urgent dental care in the dental van including exams, x-rays, fillings, restorations and extractions as needed. For more intensive dental care, such as partial or full dentures, Veterans are referred to New Day Community Dental through a subcontract with the Free Clinic.



Patients are referred through the CCVAC and must meet the eligibility requirements for the Veterans Assistance Fund. Veterans who receive dental care through Medicaid are not eligible to receive services through this program.

Since dental care is a high priority need and not easily addressed through the VA system, the Veterans Advisory Board recommended allowing Veterans earning up to 200% of poverty to access dental care.

2018	Veterans Served	Billed Amount	Value of Service
January	11	1,564.04	10,818.00
February	9	1,540.22	4,215.00
March	8	831.93	2,123.00
April	6	1,822.18	4,628.04
May	6	812.17	2,234.00
June	3	1,465.99	756.00
July	4	656.92	1,693.00
August	6	1,421.04	808.00
September	10	733.06	1,636.00
October	3	724.89	731.00
November	4	1,473.38	2,018.00
December	1	4,836.90	437.00
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$17,882.72</b>	<b>\$32,097.04</b>

# COUNCIL FOR THE HOMELESS – VETERAN DIVERSION

In collaboration with the Homeless Veteran By Name List (VBNL) committee and the Council for the Homeless, the Veterans Advisory Board researched ways to further assist Veterans in Clark County who were living on the street.

The VBNL is a group of homeless and Veteran nonprofit providers and VA staff who have developed a list of all Veterans who have been entered into the Homeless Management Information System database in Clark County. The VBNL organized the list and reached out to all of the Veterans on the list to see if they were still looking for housing or other assistance. As part of this effort, the Veterans Advisory Board recommended a \$70,000 contract to assist Veterans who are homeless with any assistance necessary to become housed.

The contract began April 18, 2018 and successfully housed 23 Veteran households (33 people in total) who did not return to the homelessness system after being assisted. Client characteristics of those assisted are below.



## Gender

Male	24
Female	9

## Age at Entry

6-11	2
12-17	4
18-23	2
24-44	5
45-54	6
55-69	11
70 and over	3

## Race

Black or African American	10
White	21
Other	2

## Prior Living Situations

Jail, prison or juvenile detention facility	1
Place not meant for habitation	24
Rental by client, no housing subsidy	5
Rental by client, with VASH subsidy	1
Staying or living with a family member	1

## FUNDING AND DEMAND FOR SERVICES

Although the economy has continued to improve, there continues to be an affordable housing shortage in Clark County. Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in 2018 was \$1,330 per month. This rent would be affordable to a household earning \$53,160 annually. Although the overall number of services provided was down in 2018, the Veterans Advisory Board and Clark County staff have been working to increase housing assistance with a focus on helping Veterans who are homeless.

## REVENUE AND EXPENSE REPORT

### Veteran's Assistance Fund – Fund 1019

**Fund Balance as of January 1, 2018** **\$417,133.33**

**Revenue:**

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Property Tax Revenue	652,213.79
Timber Revenue	1,896.40
General Fund Transfer	113,531.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	13,969.10
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$781,610.29</b>

**Expense:**

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County Staff:	
Program	24,178.43
Finance	4,248.41
Contracts	2,951.56
County Operating Expenses*	36,749.87
Contracted Services:	
Veterans Assistance Center	450,829.88
SW Washington Free Clinic Dental	18,024.72
Council for the Homeless	63,993.95
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$600,976.82</b>

**Fund Balance as of December 31, 2018** **\$597,766.80**

\*Operating expenses include supplies, travel, and indirect expenses for VAF programs.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

## 2018 Board of County Councilors

Marc Boldt, Chair

Jeanne E. Stewart, District 1

Julie Olson, District 2

John Blom, District 3

Eileen Quiring, District 4

Shawn Hennessee, County Manager

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## Clark County Staff

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## Clark County Veterans Assistance Center

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Sharon Tyre, Administrator

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