



The Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County  
555 North Court Street, Suite 300  
Rockford, IL 61103  
815-516-2850

---

Tim Hotchkiss  
Superintendent  
555 N. Court Street, Suite 300  
Rockford, IL 61103

December 31, 2025

Governor J.B. Pritzker  
State of Illinois  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

It is with great pleasure that I present you with the annual report of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County, Illinois (VACWC), pursuant to Chapter 330, Part 45, Section 8 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes.

As the foremost Veteran advocacy agency in Illinois' 7th most populous county, we provide comprehensive services in the following areas:

- 1.) Advocacy
- 2.) Veteran Benefits and Claims Management
- 3.) Financial Assistance and Referrals
- 4.) Transportation

During Fiscal Year 2025, spanning from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025, the Commission was instrumental in securing **\$1,297,636.38** in new benefits and **\$2,762,351.68** in total benefits for Winnebago County veterans, their dependents, and their survivors from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). That amount does not consider that we helped our veterans save by assisting them in accessing VA health care, home loan, or education benefits. Consequently, the Commission continues to be a significant and judicious governmental entity at the county level.

In our continued efforts to assist Veterans facing financial hardship, the Commission facilitated over **\$320,772.00** in mortgage, rent and utility assistance. This essential financial support has been instrumental in preventing the displacement of more than 75 veterans within our county who were struggling to meet their housing obligations.

Thank you for your support of our county's veterans. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Very Respectfully,

Tim Hotchkiss, Superintendent  
Email: [thotchkiss@vac.wincoil.gov](mailto:thotchkiss@vac.wincoil.gov)  
Direct: (815) 516-2852

---

# The Veteran's Assistance Commission of Winnebago County Fiscal Year 2025 - Annual Report

## Mission of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County assists Honorably Discharged Veterans, their Families and their Surviving Spouses, residing in Winnebago County, with Financial Assistance, Veterans Affairs Services and Referrals.

## VACWC Office

- ★ 555 North Court Street, Suite 300, Rockford, IL 61103
- ★ (815) 516-2850
- ★ Monday – Friday from 8:00AM to 4:00PM

## Staff of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County

- ★ Superintendent, Tim Hotchkiss
- ★ Assistant Superintendent, Debi Hoover
- ★ Lead Veteran Service Officer, Luz Ortiz-Rivera
- ★ Veteran Service Officer, Willie Borden
- ★ Administrative Assistant, Mayra Torel
- ★ Administrative Assistant, Francesca Montanez
- ★ Transportation Coordinator, Dana Verfuert

## Training

Tim Hotchkiss, Debi Hoover, Luz Ortiz-Rivera and Willie Borden are members of the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO). To maintain accreditation, 16 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are required each year.

- ★ Illinois Association of County Veteran Service Officer Training, January 2025 and July 2025
- ★ NACVSO Basic Benefit Training
- ★ NACVSO Annual Training, Louisville, KY

## Outreach Events

- ★ Top of Illinois Veterans Stand Down
- ★ Winnebago County Veteran Hiring Resource Event
- ★ Veterans Memorial Hall Veteran Benefits Class
- ★ Cremation Society of Illinois
- ★ Partnered with Fisher Outreach Group to distribute 15 Thanksgiving Turkey Dinners to Veterans
- ★ Partnered with Fisher Outreach Group to distribute 40 Christmas Gift Bags of household items to Veterans

## Commission Meetings

The VACWC Members meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30PM CST at 555 North Court Street, Suite 115, Rockford IL, 61103



## Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County Members

<p><b>American Legion Post # 288</b> Commissioner: Ken VanLandeghem Alternate: Raymond Dhom</p> <p><b>American Legion Post # 322</b> Commissioner: Gary D. Holmes Alternate: Jeff Greer</p> <p><b>American Legion Post # 1207</b> Commissioner: A.C. Dave Davis Alternate: George Meissen</p> <p><b>Blackhawk DAV Chapter # 29</b> Commissioner: Todd Burton Alternate: John Kline</p> <p><b>Navy Club Ship #1</b> Commissioner: Robert Lamay Alternate: Stephanie Gilberto</p> <p><b>Rock Valley Am Vets Post # 922</b> Commissioner: Terrell Lewis Alternate: Jeane Marie Henning</p>	<p><b>Vietnam Veterans of America # 984</b> Commissioner: Eric Willard Alternate: Jerome Egilske</p> <p><b>VFW Post # 342</b> Commissioner: Lana McCants Alternate: Sean West</p> <p><b>VFW Post # 2955</b> Commissioner: Rueben Hernandez Alternate: Billy Graves</p> <p><b>VFW Post # 5149</b> Commissioner: Nancy Clark Alternate: F.S. Tate</p> <p><b>VFW Post # 9759</b> Commissioner: Gene Schaefer Alternate: John Hood</p>
---	--

### Services

- ★ VA Compensation Claims
- ★ VA Health Care Applications
- ★ VA Pension Claims
- ★ VA Aide and Attendance Claims
- ★ VA Burial Benefits Assistance and Claims
- ★ Obtaining Discharge Documents
- ★ Obtaining Military Service Records
- ★ Obtaining Medals, Awards and Ribbons
- ★ Financial Assistance
- ★ Transportation Assistance

### Medical Transportation

- ★ Volunteer Drivers: Dale Lehner, Gene Schaefer, Jeff Nelson, Lisa Ditzler, Paul Kofoed, Rhonda Powell, and Rusty McLain
- ★ Veterans Transported: 276 (from Rockford, IL to Madison, WI VA Hospital)
- ★ Mileage Traveled: 20,700 miles



**Budget**

<b>FY2024-2025</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Supplies		\$4,905.83
Computer Equip		\$1,321.31
Data Processing		\$165.50
Gas & Oil		\$1,502.78
EXPS - Guest, Event & Speaker		\$890.25
Software		\$28,302.13
VAC Salary		\$600,147.23
Professional Services		\$39,897.52
Wireless Service		\$7,660.61
Postage		\$1,421.57
Travel		\$22,553.61
Advertising		\$15,107.42
Liability Insurance		\$8,764.00
Unemployment Insurance		\$8,735.08
Building Rental		\$2,520.00
Dues & Memberships		\$2,562.00
Instruction & Schooling		\$2,060.00
Veteran's Assistance Payments		\$320,772.34
Central Stores Xeroxing		\$983.50
Administrative & Support		\$1,381.00
	\$1,119,000.00	\$1,071,653.68

