



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/4/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name: Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Angela Struckmann, 707-565-5800, Matt Jensen, 707-565-5964

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District: Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution honoring November 11, 2025, as Veterans Day in Sonoma County

Executive Summary:

Veterans Day was established in 1919 as Armistice Day to commemorate the signing of the peace agreement that ended World War I on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. Sonoma County joins the country in honoring Veterans Day on November 11, 2025.

Discussion:

In proclaiming the veterans holiday in 1919, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson said, "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory." In 1938, a congressional act made November 11 of each year a federally recognized holiday known as Armistice Day. In 1954, the veterans' service organizations urged Congress to change the word armistice to veterans. President Eisenhower signed a bill establishing Veterans Day as a national holiday, proclaiming, "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose..."

According to the California Association of County Veterans Services Officers 2024 annual report, there are 20,291 veterans in Sonoma County. Many veterans remain unaware of, or do not use, the benefits and services for which they are eligible. Though a majority of these veterans may be eligible for medical care from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), only approximately 6,000 are enrolled and accessing the benefit. Of the veteran population in Sonoma County:

- Approximately 8% are women
- 86% are wartime veterans
- Approximately 94% are receiving some form of disability compensation or non- service disability pension from the VA

The County of Sonoma Veterans Service Office (VSO) plays a key role in ensuring that all local veterans are aware of and have access to the services and benefits they earned through their service to our nation. In 2024, the VSO served over 10,500 individuals via telephone, email and walk-in service. Of the total number of individuals served, approximately 722 had never previously sought VA services. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024 the VSO helped bring in over \$14.7 million from the VA in new and retroactive compensation and pension benefits

for local veterans.

The VSO regularly collaborates with the VA's community-based outpatient clinic in Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Junior College, the Vet Center, and the Sonoma County United Veterans Council. The United Veterans Council represents over 30 Sonoma County veteran organizations and various community-based organizations such as Vietnam Veterans of America. Veterans' organizations and veteran volunteers in the community work tirelessly along with the VSO to help veterans get the benefits they are entitled to.

Many County and community agencies provide services and supports for veterans including Regional Parks disabled veteran park access permits, Tax Assessor disabled veteran property tax exemption, Sonoma County Transit Veterans Ride Free program, Santa Rosa City Bus, Vet Connect outreach activities for homeless veterans, Human Services Department (HSD) Economic Assistance helping homeless veterans access benefits, and HSD Employment and Training helping veterans find employment. The VSO continues to facilitate a local Veteran ID card program, which to date has issued over 5,495 ID cards, allowing low income and homeless veterans access to health care and other services with free transportation on Sonoma County Transit and Santa Rosa City Bus.

The outstanding support from local government agencies, community-based organizations, and the VA makes Sonoma County a great place to be a veteran. The veterans of Sonoma County are appreciative of the recognition and support from the Board of Supervisors.

Prior Board Actions:

Every year since November 2014, the Board has adopted Gold Resolutions honoring November 11th as Veterans Day in Sonoma County.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There are no fiscal impacts.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts:

There are no staffing impacts.

Attachments:

Gold Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None