



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/5/2019

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Paul Dunaway, 565-3673, Mark Orlando 565-5955

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): All

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution honoring November 11, 2019, 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.

Discussion:

In proclaiming the 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 legal 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. He proclaimed, "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...."

There are over 23,000 Sonoma County veterans whom we honor on Veterans Day. Many veterans remain unaware of, or do not use, the benefits and services for which they are eligible.

Though a majority of Sonoma County veterans may be eligible for medical care from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, only approximately 8,000 are enrolled and accessing health care through the federal agency. Of the total veteran population in the County:

- The highest population is in the 60-79 year old age group (Vietnam War veterans)

- Approximately 8% are women veterans

- 78% of Sonoma County veterans are wartime veterans

- 22% of County veterans are receiving some form of disability compensation or non-service disability pension from the VA

The County of Sonoma Veterans Service Office plays a key role in ensuring that all veterans in Sonoma County are aware of and have the opportunity to receive the services and benefits that they earned through their service to our nation. Over the years, the Veterans Service Office has played a primary role in veterans receiving these benefits. The Veterans Service Office had over 6,000 client visits and nearly 15,000 phone calls during Fiscal Year 2018-19. In FY 2017-18, the Veterans Service Office helped bring \$14M in new and

retroactive compensation and pension benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans Affairs spending on benefits for Sonoma County residents is significant. In federal FY 2018, total Veterans Affairs spending in Sonoma County totaled \$96,550,000 in direct payments to veterans in the form of service-connected disability compensation and non-service connected disability pensions.

The Veterans Service Office collaborates with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Santa Rosa and Veteran 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 California. Veterans' organizations and veteran volunteers in the community work tirelessly along with the Veterans Service Office to help veterans get the benefits they are entitled to receive.

Additionally, many County of Sonoma agencies actively serve veterans on a routine basis. Highlights include:

- Regional Parks disabled veteran day use park access permits
- Tax Assessor disabled veteran property tax exemption
- Sonoma County Transit Veterans Ride Free program
- Santa Rosa City Bus
- Department of Health Services participation in Sonoma County Vet Connect, Inc. outreach activities for homeless veterans
- Human Services Department Economic Assistance eligibility workers helping homeless veterans access benefits at Sonoma County Vet Connect, Inc.
- Employment and Training Division staff helping veterans find employment
- The significant Sonoma County contribution to establish The Palms Inn as an opportunity to create housing for 60 homeless veterans

The County Veterans Service Office has implemented a local Veteran ID card program. To date, over 4,400 local ID cards have been issued. These ID cards allow low income or homeless veterans to access health care and other services with free transportation on Sonoma County transit and Santa Rosa City Bus.

Sonoma County Veterans Service Office has implemented the provisions of California Assembly Bill 935 (veteran designation on CA Driver License). This program allows veterans to have their status recognized on a government issued identification card, and over 1,200 veterans have taken advantage of this benefit. This new outreach activity has resulted nearly 600 new claims being filed by veterans who were previously unaware of benefits.

The outstanding support from local government agencies, combined with supportive community-based organizations and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, makes Sonoma County a great place to be a veteran. The veterans of Sonoma County are appreciative of the Board of Supervisors' support of the Veterans Service Office and the veteran community as a whole.

Planned Sonoma County Veterans Day activities on November 11, 2019:

Sebastopol: 8:30 AM Veterans Day Breakfast Sebastopol Veterans Building
Cloverdale: 7:00 PM ceremony at Cloverdale Veterans Building

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Healdsburg: 10:00 AM ceremony at Healdsburg Plaza

Windsor: 11:00 AM ceremony at Windsor Town Green (Bud Sparks Pavilion)

Santa Rosa: 10:00 AM Flag raising ceremony at Sonoma County Campus

Rohnert Park: 10:30 AM Rohnert Park Community Center

Petaluma: 12:00 PM Veterans Day Parade

Sonoma: 11:00 AM ceremony at Sonoma Veterans Memorial building

**Times and locations subject to change. Please contact appropriate City Hall prior to confirm.*

Prior Board Actions:

Each year the Board of Supervisors adopts a resolution honoring November 11, as “Veterans Day” in Sonoma County.

October 23, 2018

November 7, 2017

November 1, 2016

November 10, 2015

November 4, 2014

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	0	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

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Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None