



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0935, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

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

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution honoring November 11, 2022, as Veterans Day in Sonoma County (Countywide)

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, 2022. (Countywide)

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 25,212 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 to receive. Though a majority of these veterans may be eligible for medical care from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), only approximately 10,000 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-era)
- Approximately 6% are women
- 86% of Sonoma County veterans are Wartime Veterans
- Approximately 25% 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 (VSO) 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 last year, the VSO has continued its primary role of ensuring that veterans receive these important benefits. In 2021, the VSO served nearly 6,767 clients via telephone/email and walk-in service. Of the total clients served, approximately 646 had not previously sought services through the County

VSO or any VA services in the past. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022, the VSO helped bring \$10.7 million in new and retroactive compensation and pension benefits to Sonoma County veterans from the VA.

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 California. Veterans' organizations and veteran volunteers in the community work tirelessly along with the VSO to help veterans get the benefits they are entitled to.

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 VetConnect outreach activities for homeless veterans; Human Services Department (HSD) Economic Assistance eligibility workers helping homeless veterans access benefits at VetConnect; HSD Employment and Training staff helping veterans find employment; and the significant Sonoma County contribution to establish the Palms Inn as an opportunity to create housing for up to 75 homeless veterans.

The County VSO continues to facilitate a local Veteran ID card program. To date, over 5,000 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 CityBus.

The outstanding support from local government agencies, combined with supportive 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 Board of Supervisors' support of the VSO and the veteran community as a whole.

Prior Board Actions:

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

November 2, 2021

October 20, 2020

November 5, 2019

October 23, 2018

November 7, 2017

November 1, 2016

November 10, 2015

November 4, 2014

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

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

N/A