Department of Veteran Services

"Deeds, not words"

Ottawa County

Where Freedom Rings

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Federal VA Benefits

Assist Veterans and Families apply for:

- Service-connected VA disability compensation
- Pension Benefits (Not Military Retirement)
- Dependency & Indemnity compensation (DIC)
- Aide & Attendance
- VA Medical Benefits
- Burial & Survivor benefits

Veterans are assisted by accredited Veteran Services Officers

Financial & Emergent Funding

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund (emergency financial aid for wartime veterans)

- Veteran must have 180+ days of active military service.
- Service must include an honorable discharge.
- Must have served during a wartime era or hold an Expeditionary Medal for non-wartime service.
- 65+ Peacetime Assistance

Ottawa County Veterans Affairs Committee grants Wartime and Peacetime

- Honorably discharged veterans or their widows/widowers residing in Ottawa County.
- Veteran must have at least 90 days of active military service.
- Generally, not provided more than once in a 12-month period.

Medical Transportation

Eligibility for transportation services:

- Available to all honorably discharged veterans (wartime service not required).
- Service is for veterans with no other means of getting to medical appointments.
- A copy of the veteran's discharge papers (Form DD-214) is required.

Scheduling:

- Call 616-393-8387 with advance notice to discuss and arrange transportation.

County Burial Allowance

Veteran Burial Allowance: Ottawa County provides $300 to help cover funeral expenses for wartime veterans and their spouses with limited financial resources.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Ottawa County resident.
- Honorably discharged.
- 90 days of active duty (not training).
- Wartime service.
- Estate must be under asset limits:
  - $40,000 if there's a surviving spouse or dependent child under 18.
  - No benefit if assets cover the funeral cost for veterans without dependents.

Outreach & Community Partnerships

Connecting Veterans to Local Organizations:

- Ottawa County Veterans Affairs helps veterans connect with local nonprofits and community resources to meet their individual needs.

Services Include:

- Referrals to organizations offering mental health, employment, and housing assistance.
- Connection to support groups, educational programs, and veteran service organizations.
- Access to peer-to-peer support networks and mentorship opportunities.

Staff

County:

- Director: Jason Schenkel (Army Veteran)
- Administrative Assistant: Duane Eversole (Airforce Veteran)
- Admin Aide: Spencer Lapointe (Army Veteran)
- Community Outreach Specialist: Caleb Worpel (Airforce Veteran)
- County Veteran Service Officer: Pending Hire

Veteran Service Organizations:

- Veteran Service Officer: Cheryl Wynsma (Vietnam Vets of America) Mon, Thursday, Friday
- Veteran Service Officer: Patty Breas (American Legion) Wednesday

Budget

Funding Streams:

- General Fund
- County Veteran Service Fund Grant (Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency)
- County Board of Commissioner initiative grant
- Public Donation

Engage

Jason Schenkel | Director

Department of Veteran Affairs

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616-393-8387

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