



# 2018 VETERANS SERVICES

annual report

Veterans Services is committed to assisting all Ramsey County veterans and their families in obtaining the benefits they are entitled to through the Minnesota and U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs.

[ramseycounty.us/veterans](http://ramseycounty.us/veterans)

651-266-2545



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ramsey County is home to more than 23,000 veterans of four conflicts and other military service. Our team of six veterans service officers (VSOs) and assistants serve more than 13,500 of these men and women. In 2018 we took the important step of adding a social worker to our team who specializes in the unique needs of veterans — including long-term care management and health and housing crises.

Each person in our office is available to provide education, assistance and support to veterans and their dependents and spouses. A typical day includes locating documents, filing claims for disability and pension benefits, enrolling in VA medical care and applying for emergency benefits. Our team also helps facilitate access to benefits provided by Ramsey County partners in public health, financial assistance services, social services, and other areas.

In November, we were pleased to help honor all those who have served our country in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines and Navy as part of the commemoration of 100 years of Veterans Day. By championing this special event, we were able assist in expressing our community's gratitude to all those who have served during times of war and peace.

**Every day, it is an honor for all of us to serve those who have served.**

Maria Wetherall, VSO, Veterans Services Director

## VETERANS DAY 100 YEARS

Veterans Day originated with the historic peace agreement between the Allied nations and Germany that marked the end of World War I. On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 the fighting ceased, and the following year that day was commemorated as Armistice Day to remind nations to seek peaceful resolutions to conflicts. The year 2018 is special and historic because it marked the 100-year anniversary of Armistice Day.



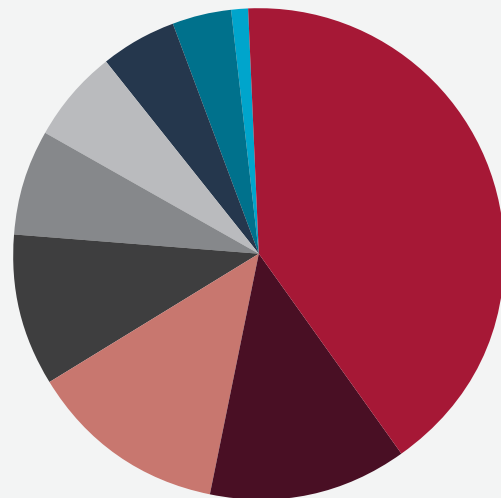
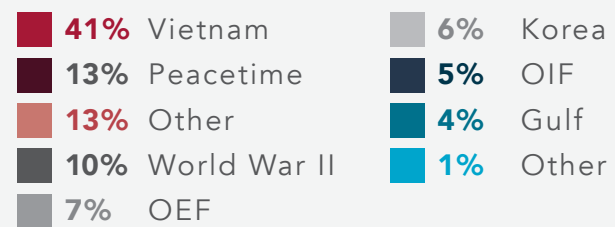
The names of Ramsey County soldiers and sailors serving in the United States military who lost their lives in eras of World War I and II, Korea and Vietnam are engraved in Memorial Hall within the Saint Paul City Hall - Ramsey County Courthouse. This memorial honors these individual service members who paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms that all of us hold dear.

President Eisenhower signed legislation reinstating Armistice Day as Veterans Day to honor veterans of all wars. Today, Veterans Day provides the citizens of our great country with the opportunity to reflect on the price we pay for war and to recognize the service and sacrifice of all veterans.

There are approximately 18.5 million veterans living in the U.S. Of those, 9.2 million are over age 65 and served our country during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam War eras. Here in Ramsey County, that trend is the same with about half of our 23,000 veterans of retirement age.

### RAMSEY COUNTY VETERANS BY ERA

23,137 Total



## Advocating and Assisting Veterans

Our team provides advocacy and assistance to help veterans and their dependents and spouses navigate and understand complex eligibility and application processes for accessing benefits for:

- Education.
- Housing.
- Utilities.
- Disability compensation.
- Supplemental pension.
- Job placement.
- Discharge upgrades.
- Burial allowance.
- Mental health services.
- VA medical system enrollment.
- Healthcare including dental and optical.



**Did you know?** In 2018, Veterans Services assisted Ramsey County veterans with accessing \$160,177 in grants from the State Soldiers Assistance Program.

## Outreach and Engagement

Many veterans are not aware of benefit eligibility. Our VSOs understand the unique needs of veterans and connecting them through family members, caregiver networks, community events, social and traditional media and outreach. We seek new ways to reach veterans from Ramsey County's diverse communities.



The activity on our webpage – [ramseycounty.us/veterans](http://ramseycounty.us/veterans) continues to climb with a 185 percent increase over 2017.

**web traffic**  
**185%**  
INCREASE  
[ramseycounty.us/veterans](http://ramseycounty.us/veterans)

Example of targeted outreach in Hmong Times

## Serving Homeless Veterans

We work with our federal, state and local partners to serve at-risk and homeless veterans. In 2018 we added a Social Worker to our team to provide hands-on assistance to veterans facing eviction, as well as elderly veterans and surviving spouses in need of longer term case management. Working with our partners, we provide veterans with direct support to find housing and access resources.

# 64

veterans found permanent housing in 2018

## Justice System Partnership

Veterans Services promotes community stability and public safety as part of the Ramsey County Veterans Court staff team. In addition, we recruit and train veteran volunteers to act as mentors for Veterans Court participants. A specialized volunteer mentor program serves veterans struggling in the criminal justice system. Twenty-six veteran mentors were paired with court participants, dedicating 1,024 hours in 2018 to assist justice-involved veterans with setting a new course for their lives.

### Veterans Court Mentor Program:

- Pairs volunteer veteran mentors with Veterans Court participants.
- Supports participants as they complete Veterans Court requirements.
- Connects Veterans Court participants to benefit experts and resources.

Ramsey County's Veterans Court offered Alex Kempe, 37, an Army reservist and Iraq veteran, the opportunity to complete chemical health treatment. Mr. Kempe accepted the support and worked hard to graduate from the program. Today he practices positive coping tools, enjoys time with his children, maintains stable housing and gives back by serving veterans directly himself as an employee of Disabled American Veterans (DAV).



Photo credit: Richard Tsong-Taatarii.  
"Twin Cities prosecutors, defenders push to expand Minnesota veteran courts"  
Star Tribune, October 13, 2018.

# 2018 Overview

## HOW WE SERVE



**2,475**

IN-OFFICE  
OR AT HOME



**33,853**

BY PHONE  
OR EMAIL

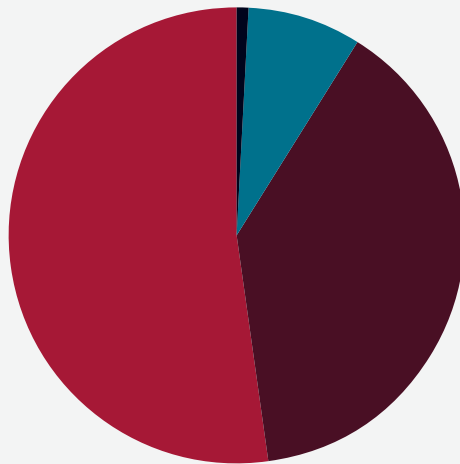


**73**

AT COMMUNITY  
OUTREACH EVENTS

## VETERANS AFFAIRS FINANCIAL DISTRIBUTION IN RAMSEY COUNTY

\$174,645,000 Total



- 52%** Value VA Medical Care
- 39%** Compensation and Pension
- 8%** Education
- 1%** Insurance